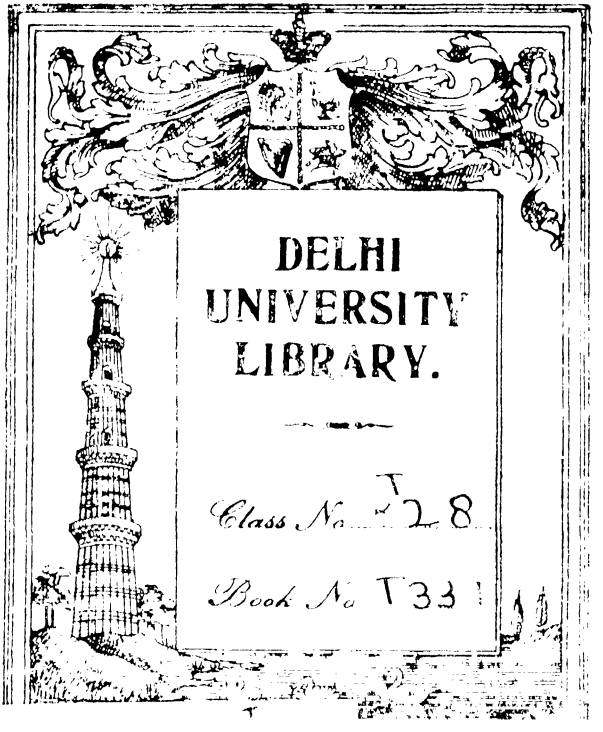
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# THIRD LEADERS

# THIRD LEADERS

Reprinted from *The Times*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

GEORGE GORDON

PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE,
OXFORD

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# INTRODUCTION

Thirteen years ago a collection of Third Leaders from *The Times* was offered to the public, and was received, not unexpectedly, with approbation. The enterprise is now repeated, in a second series, for which the same success may be predicted.

It is the fate even of *The Times*, and the principle, indeed, of a newspaper's being, to die daily. Like the politicians whose promises it records, it is at once the sport and the pensioner of oblivion. One day blots out another, and for that reason a journal flourishes, and for that reason, also, its pages are forgotten. They are antiquated in a week and survive only as record; though they may still be consulted, they will never again be read. There was a danger that these essays might succumb to this hard law, share the fate of their medium, and be buried alive in the columns where they appeared. But they are of another order of existence, and have refused to lie quiet even in the stately winding-sheet of *The Times*. Not only are they still alive, but they have declined to be superannuated. They are as good to read now as when they first adorned the middle page, and they will be even better reading fifty years hence.

It may be said without disparagement of the other columns of *The Times* that, while some may be more necessary, none is so engaging as its Third Leader Column, or mixes so well with the marmalade of the breakfast table. The chilliest morning eye, having scanned the public horizon from the deck of the First and Second Leaders, and seen national disaster postponed for another day, warms into

humanity at the sight of this pinnace which comes bobbing in their wake. It is like passing from the inanimate majesty of concrete and steel girders to heart of oak. I know nothing quite like these Leaders in modern English writing. They are the work of a number of hands, in the *Times* Office and outside it, and probably none of the writers is acquainted with all the others, or could even enumerate the whole confederacy. Yet in their style and temper there is nothing discrepant; but for some outcrops of special knowledge they might be the expression of one mind. They are extemporal compositions written, for the most part, under the conditions of daily journalism, but they seem to have profited by all the advantages of quick writing, and to have escaped all its grosser penalties. They have the speed and precision of a task efficiently performed, on which no time has been wasted, but they draw without effort on a fund of leisured observation and unhurried thought. They have preserved, against all temptations to the contrary, the true essayist's humour, an air of candid disengagement, of observant but detached concern. The periodical essay, it is known, grew out of the leading article. By a laudable reversion these leading articles are periodical essays, and they are in the best tradition of their kind. Adjust the *milieu*, and there is no journal of the great period, from Addison's *Spectator* to the *London Magazine* of Lamb, which would have refused them shelter. The more they are examined the more admirable seems their sureness of eye, their mellow English temper, and the dexterity with which Addison, in the twentieth century, handles a fountain pen.

There are 116 essays in this collection, and not half-a-dozen that disappoint. It is something of a triumph. A leader-writer, even a Third Leader writer, has temptations

from which the ordinary essayist is exempt. Pomposity waits upon him, as by official right; time-honoured phrases flutter about his head; he is horribly tempted to press the moral. He may begin like a fellow-creature, but as his pen gathers way it is fortunate if he does not presently become a Public Uncle, booming advice from the hearthstone, or the British Aunt speaking sharply from behind her needles. There are rare moments in these papers when the voice of the leader-writer threatens to drown the gentler accents of the essayist, when the occasion is improved at the expense of the theme. But almost invariably the voices blend, and the moral, if unavoidable, is smilingly conveyed, as by one sinner to another, with a humorous acceptance of our common frailty.

The first trial of an essayist is how he opens, and of scarcely less consequence is how he ends. The gentlemen riders of this volume are in the saddle in the first sentence, and will generally be found trotting up the avenue in the last. Having much to say, and little space or time to say it in, they say it at once, and keep it squarely in evidence to the end. The effect is one of cleanness and dispatch. The forced economy of the leader-writer dictates, to his advantage, both his entrance and his exit. I select an opening at random. "There are many people now who like dirt, not on human beings, where they still call it dirt, but on pictures and other works of art, where they call it mellowness." This cannot be mistaken: we are off. The choice of topics is catholic. Tortoises, Poke-Bonnets, and Hot-water Bottles, English Lawns and Old Masters compete for our attention with Village Inns and The Stellar System, Winter Walks and Poulterers' Shop-windows, The Future Music of Bells and Russ "the resident rat-catcher of the Lion House at the Zoo." Life is amicably surveyed both indoors and out, though with a healthy English leaning to the open air. By a happy arrangement

the essays obey the suggestion of their date. They follow, unobtrusively, the order of the Seasons, and we find when the book is finished that we have made a progress through the English Year.

I am tempted to single out from the scribes and country-lovers to whom we owe these papers one writer in whom their gifts seem to reach a higher power: a trained and exquisite observer, and a learned as well as devoted student of our woods and fields. But I am unwilling to dissect so harmonious a partnership, and the Genius of Anonymity would rebuke me if I tried. Let his merits be absorbed, and his passion for England. The changing face of England, the England of yesterday and to-day, is the subject of this book. But it is seen by these writers, and not by one of them only, but by all, against the background of that other England which somehow does not change; which was Victorian England, and Shakespeare's England, and is also, miraculously, ours.

I remarked, as a singular quality of this book, that we are so seldom conscious of a change of company as we turn its pages. There is here, no doubt, besides the natural likeness of its writers, a spirit of the group. I propose to give it features. Since our composite Author must not be critically dismembered, I shall attempt, what is easier, to personify him. He is, as I see him, a south-country Englishman of mature middle age, though with spurts of youth; Oxford bred (in spite of attempts at impartiality, "Cam and Isis" and so forth); and professionally employed somewhere east of Temple Bar. His work has made him a Londoner and a loyal one, and he cannot pass St. Paul's without a momentary exaltation. He has an eye for the multifarious appearances of the Metropolis, its streets, its temples, its crowds, its parks: in these last he delights,

and reminds us with no common pride that "sheep are actually more familiar in the heart of London than in the landscape of most Continental countries." The observation is characteristic, for though London has his working days, he is too good an Englishman to be possessed by it. His mind, even in the City, is never far from country things, and he escapes to them when he can to laugh at bustle and top-hats. He is a firm upholder of his county, and believes, against the Levellers, that there should be a pride of county as well as a pride of country, and that "the more each county remains itself, the more truly will the result be England." Though he grumbles a little, out of national habit, he secretly enjoys the more than feminine caprice of what he calls, a little pompously, "our mixed and singular climatic heritage." Finally, he is full of country hints, and can tell you where a primrose or a strawberry may be gathered in any month of the year. Foreigners, and some of our public men, might learn from this Author, and from the most innocent-seeming parts of him. For he describes an art of living, and portrays by implication a kind of Englishman not yet uninfluential, who has puzzled observers, and of whom most newspapers say nothing.

It would be unfair to insist on our Author's years, which have brought him wisdom, but there are many signs of an honourable maturity. He quotes Miss Mitford and the Latin poets; he is beginning to forget his *Last of the Mohicans*; and he still speaks, on occasion, of "Mr." Ruskin. He notes, also, as one of the advantages of the blackberry that it can be gathered without stooping. Though a motorist from force of circumstance he is to be suspected of preferring trains, which he seldom boards without first paying a visit to the engine. Like the retired Scottish King he has "declined upon horticulture," and can point to "a daisy fork worn and polished with years

of effort." His garden is planted, after an older fashion, for scent as well as bloom, and he condemns the misguided "florism" of the present age. For a garden without odour, he asserts, is "like loud orchestral music without melody, or like wit without kindness, or beauty without sense." With ripeness, let it be confessed, there has come upon our friend a love of comfort and studied ease. I cannot otherwise explain his inordinate satisfaction on perceiving under the coverlet, as he goes to bed, "the faint but fateful convexity" which denotes a Hot Bottle. Yet traces of a hardier era still linger. He can recall the time, before deck-chairs, when such out-of-door comfort was indecorous; he declares, of greatcoats, that a "hatred" of them is "deeply rooted in human nature"; and it is one of his aphorisms that "the only noble gesture attainable with a clinical thermometer is that of throwing it out of the window." It should be added that though he still plays golf, he now only watches cricket—"that green island with its fifteen inhabitants in white."

He makes few complaints, though Youth is passing him, and his eyes are fixed no longer upon the ambrosial fronts of the years, but upon their rearward baldness. He does, indeed, suggest that an interval of Tortoise worship would do our breakneck age no harm. But on the whole he is disposed to be thankful. He is glad to have known (what Youth can never know) the world of the Nineties, but he would not for anything have missed the world he is in. The new motor roads upset him, but only at first. The old roads were so cosy: the "little circle of ten or fifteen miles round one's home seemed intimate and one's own." Now the roads are anybody's and everybody's. Yet in these new roads—"bare, open, shadeless, and shameless, as shiny as steel and as hard as the rigour of commerce"—he acknowledges a new quality, perhaps of beauty. He is hard only on the vulgar, and above all Vul-

garities, on that disease of wealth, that monstrous torpor, which he calls the life *de luxe*. It is not even exciting, for though "the wages of sin are death, the wages of the *de luxe* world are dullness as deep as that which broods over any other kind of mediocrity." Of the present age he asks only one insistent question, and it is this. Why are we content to be dowdy in ourselves and to boast only of our super-products? Why is it that when we compare our own with past ages, it is always things we boast of and not men? This cuts deep. To forward Youth his message is short: "The present is always infallible until it becomes the past; and then it is usually wrong."

GEORGE GORDON.

OXFORD,
*January* 26, 1928.

## SOME NEW THING

In spite of the customary celebration of January 1 as the beginning of a New Year, it is not really until about April that it comes home to even the least perceptive of men that everything around him is once more being made miraculously new. It is the peculiar virtue of the Easter holiday and of the days that follow that they lure or drive forth myriads, pent as a rule within the narrow channels of town life, to see with their own eyes in meadow, wood, heath, or park that Nature's dying has once more been the gateway to new life. Faithful observers have already seen their first swallow and heard their first cuckoo. The tide of life has once more turned unmistakably towards the flood; and man is not inclined to leave all the newness to Nature. He is not content that the wanton lapwing and the burnished dove should have a monopoly of bright new raiment. No less than the dædal earth, he feels the impulse to renew his wardrobe and to adorn his dwelling-place afresh. Spring fashions and house redecoration seem to him the natural preoccupations of the season. But he does not stop short at outward renewal and repair. The growing light and the rising warmth put him into the sanguine mood. He is once more hopeful about himself and his outlook. He sees sunny days and glorious games ahead. It is not too early to begin to plan the summer holiday. The winter of his discontent is definitely over, and he is happily so much a creature of the moment that he successfully burkes the certainty of its ultimate return.

There is nothing to reproach in this bland acceptance of the year's newness. Some new thing man still must have, no less certainly than St. Paul's Athenians. He lives by

change. It is the law of his being that he should crave for novelty and strain every nerve to get it. Uncritical and uncomplaining acquiescence in the ordinary and the stale is a symptom of encroaching decay and impending death. The greyest of lives must have its change and its novelty if it is to be distinguishable from automatism or coma.

The common mistake is to suppose that the newness, whose call is so imperious, is necessarily some addition from without. We seek feverishly for the new thing in the outside world. We spend ourselves in the pursuit of diversion and excitement. But the lesson which the wise man has learned is that newness of life, like the newness of the spring world about him, is no extraneous treasure-trove, but the outward token of an inner impulse which has "rent the veil of his old husk." Scanning the heavens for the sign which is to be the herald of newness in their lives, men have no eyes left for the energy of creative change which dwells in every one of them. Each sun bringing a new day brings as surely yet another chance of pouring new wine from the old bottle. The magic lies not in what a man takes in, but in that which he puts forth; not in receptivity, but in effort. Whether the new thing which each day is shall be for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, is not left to the sport of teasing circumstance. It is in a man's own hands either to raise each new day's increment aloft on an altar of sacrifice or to sink it in the daily deepening pit of selfishness.

## ON HAVING TIME

It is impossible to walk about London without being struck by the number of people who seem to have time on their hands. The riders in the Row are secure of their gallery along the railings. An appreciative crowd hangs

about Birdcage Walk listening to the band at Wellington Barracks, and lightly spares the time to march with it to St. James's Palace for the changing of the guard. These and kindred attractions do not appear to draw from the great shopping areas any appreciable fraction of the swarms of leisured shoppers whose unhasting and zigzag movements drive to distraction anyone who is really in a hurry to get somewhere and to do something. Anywhere at any time, a street accident, a wedding, the sight of a man in the hands of the police, even the stopping of a pedestrian to gaze earnestly at the sky, at once becomes the nucleus of a goodly gathering to which time does not appear to be of the essence of the question. It would be an interesting experiment to ask these cheerful spendthrifts of the passing hour to do something which could be counted upon as distasteful to them. The odds are that most of them would say, and say with conviction, that they had not time to do it. For, in the matter of believing that they have or have not time, men are prone to amazing inconsistencies and to almost unlimited self-deception.

For these failings the tricky nature of time itself is responsible in no small measure. Assumed as an unvarying and infallible standard of duration, time plays but poorly the part for which it is cast. As a constant it is an impostor. Ages before Einstein it was known for the creature of relativity that it is. Ever since men were men there have been the hours which hold a lifetime of remorse or agony and the days of bliss which flash past like seconds. Over and above this fundamental flaw, time is one of those irritating commodities the supply of which is never exactly equal to the demand. There is always either too much of it or too little. The result is in either case calamitous. The man who has too much time is driven to the murderous expedient of trying to kill it. The man who has too little is another Tantalus, who sees the object of

his desire for ever slipping through his fingers and yet is unable to snatch enough of it to still his craving. To few is it given to attain the serene height of a Civil servant of a bygone day who, in his equal horror of arrears and of overtime, was wont to divide the number of files claiming his attention into the number of minutes in a normal working day and to ration his official energies according to the quotient. Even that philosophic device fails unless it works upon a known quantity of time.

The main difficulty in the use of time lies precisely in the fact that, while every man knows that the total amount at his disposal is strictly limited, he does not know, and can by no means discover, where the limit lies. It is as if he were given authority to draw cheques against a credit at the bank, but were not told the figure of the credit. A great effort of imagination and will is needed to keep in consciousness a limit which is out of sight and at an unknown distance. For most of us the effort is too great. We live in consequence as if there would be in the long run plenty of time for everything. From that optimism springs the cry of "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow" for the uninteresting task and the irksome duty. The man who, in the reaction from that mood, tries to obey the behest to live as if each day were to be his last, is not automatically freed from the difficulties and doubts inherent in the time relationship. But, if his more strenuous gospel fails, no less than its flaccid opposite, to add a single moment to his allotted span, at least it nerves him to do his best, within the compass of his brief hour, to put first things first.

## BEFORE BREAKFAST

By common reckoning life begins at breakfast, slowly and inarticulately like history, all else being regarded as prehistoric. Other parts of the day are lignified with names—the morning, the afternoon, and the evening—but the period between the rising of the sun and the arrival of the postman has, in ordinary language, no name of its own. Dawn, cockcrow, and the rising of the lark are extravagant figures of speech. Human life before breakfast is to many so rare that those who, on a particular morning, happen to have lived it return to the society of normal men as explorers return from a strange adventure.

But it is an adventure well worth undertaking, especially in late summer, when, under the influence of artificial time, it is no longer possible, as it would be in June, to rise unconscionably long before the normal day begins. Even in London, during September, if one wakes at the right moment to see the sun newly risen, one may long to be abroad; but a country village is the true place for the experiment. The absence of much that is familiar exempts the hour from inclusion in the current time-sequence; thus, we may fancy, did the Elizabethans look upon the world when they rose of a morning, or men more primitive than they. At the beginning of the day history is no more; the centuries and all their accretions drop away, and what Wordsworth said, at the other end of the day, about twilight and the rude Briton has its matutinal counterpart.

The fact that other men are asleep is a quickener of perception, as if, while we saw the light increase and the

long shadows grow less, some voice reminded us that of this tremendous pageant there was no other witness, and in this tranquillity, having the peace but not the weary splendour of sunset, there was none other to share. The solitary observation of natural changes begets an intimacy with earth which men cannot attain in company. When the mists yet cling to the hedges like the wool of some ghostly flock and a small elm in mid-meadow, with the sun in its upper branches, is a phantom shepherd in a tawny hat, those few who are awake have a sense of secretiveness and rarity which, among all the mysteries of the countryside, comes to them at no other time.

An English village awakens slowly, as men awaken who are not harshly stirred. There is no sudden instant of routine, as there is in towns and in many villages abroad, when sleep breaks sharply into activity. A window, a head, a door, a dog may severally by their action indicate the change. At that hour men come out silently and alone, seeming to prefer solitude to companionship. They are not quite as other men are, or as they themselves would be at another time. They have an added significance, an air of power and simplicity of purpose, a swing in their stride that makes giants of them, fit to stand out against the sky with the elm-tree shepherd. The morning twilight and the great emptiness of the world at cock-crow add something to a man's stature. We return from them with a sense of loss. Not even the mushrooms which we bring in with us can persuade a laggard household into believing that we have been in a magic place.

## BLACK DRESS

At first sight the dullness of most masculine clothing is apt to appear emphasized in spring by contrast with nature's gaiety. Amid doves gleaming with a livelier iris, and lapwings fitted with new crests, man in a black coat and "subfusc" trousers seems to cut an undistinguished figure. This impression is but superficial. Observation and reflection alike support the respectably unostentatious citizen in his rejection of the bright colours—puce, or canary-yellow, or maroon—which delighted our ancestors for plain modern black and grey. As we survey the winged creation in spring time we shall soon learn that a touch of black in the dress is approved wedding wear. The lap-wing's crest itself is blacker; blacker, too, grows his breast as, week by week, he perfects his nuptial splendour. The golden plover's substitution of a black for a white shirt-front is even more striking, and the various stages of its development in different races and specimens suggest that it is an adornment which has been only gradually and with difficulty acquired. Even the common house-sparrow—a neat bird when not smirched by town vapours—has an ingenious method of shedding in early spring the greyish tips of its breast-feathers, so that his mate sees him under the suns of the vernal equinox clothed in sumptuous black.

While black plumage is assumed by certain birds for their honeymoon, it is worn by some of the most notable at all seasons. Rooks, ravens, and carrion crows have no superiors among birds in intelligence, and their plumage is black wholly and always, except for a greenish gloss which, though not unknown in the human integument, is

there less graceful than in their own. The blackbird provides a yet more conspicuous example of the propriety and distinction of black masculine dress. The hen blackbird's plumage is a variety of the various shades of brown which clothe most of the other members of this musical family. By him alone, in spite of the distractions of an artistic temperament, pure black is chosen in which to sing.

It is noticeable that black pelts become common among animals in domestication; and we may perhaps regard this as another attempt of nature, when liberally housed and nourished, to progress towards a state of perfection. It is true that this development has not always protective value, as when a pet Pomeranian succeeds in concealing itself all too well on a black hearthrug beneath the heavily descending foot. But every advance in nature has doubtless been won by sacrifice, and pet dogs can be made to wear pink bows. It is instructive, too, to note how the same choice of a black covering for maturity animates wild nature and man. The young blackbird expands a tawny and spotted bosom, and the young black swan, repudiating the sober darkness of its parents' livery, for some time wears what looks like a suit of dirty flannels. Can we not observe a like tendency to variation among the masculine youth of our own species? Though the blackbird, while callow, wears the analogue of a Fair Island pull-over, a little later it will adopt the neat and unostentatious dress which taste and experience have recommended.

## SPRING IN THE TREES

The beauty of trees has phases unsuspected by those who regard them as negligible until they are in summer leaf. If we have tired of the rare tracery, showing each tree's fundamental and characteristic structure, which

woods and parks have displayed since November, February diverts us by new developments. Spring's approach is signalled by the twigs for many weeks before they break into actual verdure. Black poplars in town parks and country pastures are already thickening with incipient catkin-buds; on many of the slighter aspens the furry catkins themselves are already expanding. Elms on sheltered hillsides are darkening against the sky's background with the more plentiful flower-buds which in a month, or little more, will burst into a stain of crimson. Warm colour is already not lacking in the tops of many trees. Woods of young birches shine almost crimson in the February light; and almost as lively a promise of spring's ardour glows in the fans of brushwood which fringe the spreading boughs of the beeches. The conflict between lingering winter and oncoming spring, which in the English climate is so long-drawn, seems typified and concentrated in the finely divided birch-boughs. After a heavy February rainstorm their profuse and slanting spurs retain the drops so thickly that at a little distance the whole tree, or the whole wood, seems enveloped in a grey haze. The same wind which shakes the twigs free of their misty envelope often clears the sun's face of cloud, and throws a bright beam on their rind reddening for spring.

February provides new incidents both in town and country to amuse those who care to watch winter boughs. In London parks on any decently springlike morning we may already see the paired ringdoves sitting amicably together on some old black platform of a nest, and billing and cooing after the fashion of their kind. Rooks beside country churchyards are more solemn in their habit of wooing; they appear to be not merely love-making, but engaged in negotiating a nuptial alliance. In spite of their almost supernatural dignity, their wastefulness of

nesting-material betrays a weakness which appeals as human, and the beginning of their nesting in February fills the branches with new interest and the paths beneath them with new litter.

Now, too, the tree-tops in village and city begin to be studded more often with those eager propagandist singers which, with a vociferation all but tiresome in its monotony, make it their business to announce the "inevitability of gradualness," and the consequent certainty that spring is coming. Before February that "mounted thrush" is almost always a song-thrush; in coming weeks the larger missel-thrush more often perches on a higher and barer bough, and flings a song which, though more limited and ruder, needs care to distinguish it from the blackbird's. In some spell of dry winds in late winter the sooty tassels which have dangled for months upon the plane-trees break up and scatter those parachute-like seeds which, when blown into water-butts, present such an odd likeness to gnat or mosquito larvæ. As the light grows stronger in the beech-woods, it emphasizes that contrast on the trunks between the vivid patches of green algæ and the black channels of rain shed from branch to earth, which is obscured again when the leaves spread their canopy. Though winter is often prolonged in England until April or May, spring as regularly begins in January or February; and those who are alert to its first manifestations take the best advantage of our mixed and singular climatic heritage.

## NATURAL CLOCKS

It is by common consent a folly to reckon the seasons by their dates. They obey no law; they come and go when they will; they peep round the corner a dozen times before making a decisive entrance. Even when they seem

to have come to stay and we have changed our clothes and our habits to suit them, they prove themselves unreliable and discourteous guests. No sooner are we used to their company than they make off without an apology as if they had forgotten something, and reappear a week or a fortnight later bringing with them neither compensation nor excuse for having ruined a harvest or disconcerted a swallow. It is best, say the cautious, to disregard all their promises and to hang their engagement card with its face to the wall. Summer, autumn, winter, and spring, they are goddesses of caprice; they have no conscience. With these people, as the Scottish emigrant said when he landed in Australia, "even the calendar is full of lies."

Nevertheless we shall continue, because we must, to put a reluctant confidence in them—to believe that our own cricket fields will be not intolerable in June or that the Swiss mountains will yield convenient snow in January. Our trust is at best uncertain—so weak that we are surprised if the seasons reward it, yet so strong that we are disappointed if they do not. Hopes, fears, and experience are in perpetual conflict, and tapping of the barometer becomes at once a sanguine and a cynical habit. But trust of some sort there must be or no plans would ever be made and the whole year be, in theory as well as in practice, a chaos of flannels and furs, of muslins and mackintoshes.

In order, therefore, that the movements of the seasons may be written down in a manner neither too rigid nor too vague, every one invents, for lack of a truthful calendar, a seasonal timepiece of his own. One, who judges by the birds, publishes eagerly to mankind the news of his earliest encounters with his chosen messengers; their comings and goings are for him the ticking of nature's clock. Another, who sees the year reflected in his dinner plate and half the world in an oyster, waits until the R vanishes with April before preparing himself for the opposite delights

of summer. A third reckons time by strawberries; a fourth by the clouts he is inclined to cast; a fifth, with the roving eye of the eighteenth-century essayists, by the dress of ladies met over a dish of tea.

Miss Mitford, being neither a gourmet nor a flâneur, spoke of the "flower-clock," and there is, perhaps, for those who know how to tell the time by it, no more accurate or more charming clock than this. If it is "slow," if spring seems eternally delayed, it has the miraculous property, possessed by no other clock in the world, of providing its owner with rich compensations. "Sad wintry weather," Miss Mitford reports on April 18; "a north-east wind; a sun that puts out one's eyes without affording the slightest warmth . . . nature at a dead pause." There were, in "Our Village," no seeds up, no leaves out, no cowslips, no nightingales, no swallows, "no cuckoos (that ever I should miss that rascally sonneteer!) in any part." Her neighbours, if any of them went by the bird-clock, must have been in despair, and the dresses of the ladies can have given few signs of spring amid "rain that came chilly and arrowy like hail in January." But Miss Mitford, after her manner in the midst of greater troubles, was cheerfully composed. Her particular timepiece revealed to her compensations for its own delay.

"There is something of a charm," she says, "in this wintry spring, this putting back of the seasons. If the flower-clock must stand still for a month or two, could it choose a better time than that of the primroses and violets? . . . Primrosy is the epithet this year will retain in my recollection." Afflicted by like weather, we choose sometimes more vigorous epithets with which to describe it, but none so fragrant and, perhaps, none so wisely just as hers. It is pleasant to know that her forbearance had its reward. In two days the face of the flower-clock was smiling on her. On April 20 spring was "actually come.

. . . To-day is complete April . . . swallows by the ponds, snakes in the hedgerows, nightingales in the thickets, and "—at last!—"cuckoos everywhere.' From which happy experience we may now take heart if the frosts persist long after the calendar has bidden them farewell.

Less than a month earlier "Our Village" was a bleak place. On March 27 Miss Mitford writes: "It is a dull, grey morning, with a dewy feeling in the air." "Fresh" and "cool" are her kindly adjectives; yet, she adds, "the very day for a person newly arrived from . . . the fever of London to plunge into the remotest labyrinths of the country, and regain the repose of mind, the calmness of heart, which has been lost in that great Babel." So much philosophy, it seems, is all in the gift of the flower-clock. At the head of her chapter stands the one word "Violeting." Better than a vain quest of the cuckoo, better far than forlorn hunching by the winter's fire, is this good lady's wooing of a timid spring.

## ISLANDS OF SAINTS

The eternal paradox of St. Patrick, whose tutelage gives to the island of his apostolate a unity unrecognized in other regards, reminds us of much that lies behind the association of saints with islands. St. John's visionary years by the Aegean; St. Cuthbert's beloved hermitage upon the bird-haunted cliffs of his Farne islet; St. Colomb's chosen Iona; the enchanted isle to which St. Brandan voyaged—all these bring before us the image of an island as being, for some reason or other, a fitter home of dreams and of ideals than any point on Continental territory. With St. Patrick there is a certain distinction from those who have sought in islands just solitude and the impersonal music of the sea. His mission to Ireland was not in any way to find a

place of refuge from human assertion—rather the direct contrary. He was a humanist, and what would now be called a "realist" in the strongest sense. "I dwell," so he write to Coroticus, "in the midst of barbarous heathens, a stranger and exile for the love of God. . . . Is it from me that I show godly compassion towards that nation which once took me captive and harried the man-servants and maid-servants of my father's house?"

Everything that history tells us about St. Patrick suggests, in like manner, a very human saint—irascible, perhaps, but of an essentially sociable disposition, and masterful in his handling of men. His conversion of King Loigaire by the defiant bonfires at Slane testifies to this; so do his sporting challenge to those "philosophers in trousers," the Druids, his allusions to himself as a "rustic and unlearned sinner," his vigorous escape from slavery and the herding of swine, and even that nightmare after dining on roast pork which he turned to such inspiring account. Yet no one who has visited the scenes in Ireland traditionally connected with St. Patrick, from Slemish to Westport, can fail to recognize the atmosphere of island-magic. It has invested for ever the legend of Ireland's saint, as so much of that other mystical lore which has become a part of Ireland's self. To how great an extent what was an "island of saints" is still an island of dreams!

At the same time, while the very word "island" suggests something beautiful to us, a curiously jarring element is introduced when we speak of "insularity." Why should this be? It is possible that both St. Patrick and others of the Celtic saints as well could help to explain. If we throw our imaginations back to that dim but fascinating fifth century, we find not only Ireland, but Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany prolific of saints in a quite startling degree—saints who seem never to have ceased plying to and fro, bent at once upon enlightenment and upon conciliation.

Their attention to all sorts of islands, small and large, appears to have been often due to a desire not so much for solitude as to be at once comparatively secure and adjacent to the sea as the greatest and busiest of highways. Although he devoted so much of his life to Ireland, no one could well be found less "insular" than St. Patrick. Whether he is to be identified with Palladius or not—whether he came from Dumbarton or from the Severn's side—he was in any case not an Irishman. It happens, too, that another island also claims him as its patron—the Isle of Man, whither the "ogre" MacCuill drifted at his bidding to become (so the story goes) its worthy and devoted bishop.

When we look upon islands in the light of the journeyings of men like St. Patrick himself, St. Germains, and St. Cadoc, who encountered the "tyrant Arthur" on a memorable occasion, we realize the better how little value lies in mere insularity. No island—even of a "faërie land forlorn"—is any more beautiful, or certainly any holier, for being unvisited. The idea that islands must of necessity be more removed in spirit from their neighbours because they are islands is one of those wholly illogical fallacies which, in days of ready and universal communication like our own, St. Patrick himself would soon have resolved. He might even have exercised upon it the same ingenuity which had recourse to the shamrock for inculcating a deeper truth.

## PRIMROSES

Nature has experimented with the tribe of primulas in many lands, but it is doubtful whether she has anywhere devised another example so satisfying as the common English primrose. No blossom more perfectly combines simplicity with distinction; and few are more prodigally

abundant where soil and climate are reasonably hospitable, and improvident rapacity has not eradicated it.

Though it is by no means confined to Great Britain, it is nowhere more thoroughly at home than in our mild and moist air. The fullness of its flower-time in April is the climax of an almost unsleeping annual growth. There is probably no month in any year when wild primroses cannot be found blooming somewhere in this country. Like the song of the thrushes, which receives a like impetus from our mild insular climate, primrose blossom begins to revive in early autumn, anticipating spring. By midwinter the rare blooms of Michaelmas have increased into a fairly numerous company in the shelter of Devonshire and Sussex woods; and from that time forward there is a rapid multiplication until the lanes and copses are glorified. From mid-May primrose-seekers must go northward, like epicures following the ripening strawberry-wave. In August the latest survivors of spring are still seen blooming beside the trout-lochs of the Hebrides, only a few weeks before the pioneers of the new season open in southern woods at cub-hunting time. This persistency of blossom is made possible by a vegetative vitality which is hardly checked at any season, and has made the primrose, like the bramble, almost an evergreen. The old year's leaves survive, tarnished but still living, to nurse the new season's shoots.

Primroses are notoriously not yellow to any but an indifferent eye; the contrast is plain enough where they are scattered on the spring banks among dandelions or celandines, or when the male brimstone butterfly alights to drain their nectar. Yet their unique tint is yellow enough vividly to enlighten the green of most spring herbage. Primrose-colour is distilled from the moisture of our atmosphere more than from its sunlight. Plants exposed to the full measure of our not too abundant spring sunshine often

lose the almost translucent delicacy of their blossoms, which become ivory-like and opaque.

Many favourite plants attract superstitions, and the daring belief survives in country villages that a primrose plant buried head downwards will send up blossoms of the shade of dull purple familiar in old gardens. The experiment appears as unattractive as unpromising; for the tint of the purple primrose is far less delicate. Few flower-lovers, as distinct from lovers of rarities, would even be ready to exchange the primrose for the richly scented oxlip—wholly distinct from the widely diffused hybrid—which in the copses of a certain tract in the eastern counties so strangely takes the primrose's place. Part of the primrose's charm is in its abundance and hardihood, and the eastern oxlip is usually a rather fastidious bloomer, demanding exact conditions of shelter and light. Primrose-blossom lavishes itself with the democratic profusion of most English bird-song, which to the taste of a famous American naturalist appeared too coarsely loud. Yet for more than a generation most lanes and woods near London have been bare of the once abundant flower; and with the spread of building and traffic a like devastation threatens many other country districts, unless protective measures are not merely adopted but enforced.

## BACK TO THE LAND

Round London and other large towns the approach of Easter sees the return of week-end walking clubs, and other gregarious ramblers, to the footpaths and commons; though not all such associations hibernate like hedgehogs and bats, or retire to warmer winter quarters like the swallows. The bait that draws town walkers to country footpaths appears to vary. Some club walks provide an

agreeable combination of social intercourse with healthy physical exercise, and a not too exacting appreciation of the beauties of nature. With well-chosen companions there is always the refuge of intellectual discussion when the lambs and the primroses become tedious. The return of the cuckoo can be alternated as a conversational topic with the return to a gold standard, and, if the skylarks obtrude themselves too noisily, relief is found from them over the simple plenty of the luncheon table in some well-chosen inn. Other walkers appear in groups and couples like sand-martins, rather than in flocks like May frogs, and many of them afford mild amusement to rustic dullards by their evident sense of being bound on a dramatic adventure. They can be heard speaking of walking as "tramping"; their collars are of ostentatious looseness, they wear ski-ing boots, and their walking-sticks are of the stoutness of those preferred by Sir Harry Lauder.

From the visits of these more striking spring migrants, as from those of the field clubs which plan a walk with some specific purpose, and of single naturalists and country lovers, certain definite advantages spring. The more that footpaths are used in outlying places the less is the chance of their disappearing, in fact if not in right. Village mothers who send children to school across newly ploughed fields have been heard to declare that "the going will be better when the Londoners come." Thus week-end walkers who lurch painfully across sticky ridges may take credit for opening the path of knowledge to infant feet. In proportion as dwellers in cities grow familiar with country villages they will be readier to help in such voluntary services as the preservation of historic ruins, or of other historic buildings which can be saved from ruin. They become interested in safeguarding the spots of beauty which have given them pleasure, and imbibe that fostering interest in open spaces which leads to support of the work of the

National Trust and its kindred organizations. They achieve a substantial public benefit in improving the fare and accommodation at remote village inns; many small innkeepers who profess complete inability to satisfy the needs of motorists can be encouraged to rise to the demands of those who arrive modestly on foot.

Nor is it habitual walkers who every Easter strip the country of flower roots and blossoms. Motorists are not guiltless of this offence, nor are humbler holiday trippers. The visits of both these classes into the lanes and woods where flowers grow most freely are occasionally raids, whereas walkers who come regularly learn to prefer to see the blossoms unravished.

## WINDOW-SEATS

From the fireside we are suddenly transported to that other haven of comfort in any well-appointed chamber, the window-seat. In any really inhabitable room there should be a window-seat; and happy are they who when the season calls can cross over to it. For it is the complement to the hearth, and in countless old houses, where the builders knew what they were doing, it has probably been, more than is generally realized, the focus in summer of many of those pleasures that in winter are associated with the fireside.

> "Sister Mary, come and sit
> Here beside me in the bay
> Of the window—ruby-lit
> With the last gleams of the day"—

so sang Tom Hood; but the window-seat is not necessary for the sunset; to enjoy it as it should be enjoyed it should be sat in whenever, according to its aspect, the sun is

playing on it outside; and to be a good window-seat it should be deep and cool, yet withal light and cheerful for the sitter.

Should things be kept in window-seats? Our ancestors, to judge by the occasional survival of what was once probably a common habit, seem to have kept books in them. "N.B.," as a leisured eighteenth-century divine entered in his diary, "Never to transcribe any more from Calamy; Mrs. Pilcocks, at my curacy, having one volume of that author laying in her parlour-window." Though it is not specifically mentioned, there must have been, when one comes to think of it, a particularly excellent window-seat in the library at Waverley-Honour; for to read in so romantic an apartment elsewhere than in the window during the month when Nature outside shines at her fairest would be to fail to make the most of the two worlds of reality and fancy. It may be questioned whether the two can be so aptly reconciled in any other place, or at any time than May. Given the scents and sounds of that month, given also the appointed author, our window-seat becomes a magic casement. We are both within and without doors, on the confines where meet two, if not three, orders of existence.

Surely this is a rare felicity, this Mayday of the outer and the inner man together. To those who search at great pains and expense to procure the pleasures which are conventionally supposed to belong to the season it may seem unintelligible; but connoisseurs of quiet enjoyment may possibly want to know more, even the name of the appointed author. In that case the secret shall not be withheld from them. He is one of the first of lettered Englishmen who went a-Maying, Edmund Spenser. Just as musicians and painters receive the homage of their admirers in appropriate opera-houses and galleries, we believe that Spenser, the master of poetic allegory, should receive

his in the appropriate borderland of a window-seat. In that embrasure, once at least every May, we would have him command his due; for if ever in literature there was a counterpart to the crowded scenes of stirring life, expanding leaf, and bursting blossom, which are now to be observed in the countryside, it is to be found in the intricate mazes and luxuriant pageantry of the *Faerie Queene*.

## MAYFLY TIME

In spite of east winds and cold rain the mayfly invites the attention of fishermen and moralists upon its accustomed waters. It is possible that the patronizing pity of the moralist has been a little overdone. Although, owing to its many enemies, the average expectation of life of the winged mayfly may not exceed a day, its flourishes above the river are now known to be the mere spectacular *finale* of a much longer life under water. Who can say that the mayfly is not justly repelled by its glimpse of that existence in the sunshine—or the east wind and rain—which it briefly shares with humanity, and pities mankind for living its whole life among the discomforts of the air? Ampler knowledge of its snug life in the mud may one day suggest to self-conscious human symbolists a change of figure. Instead of serving as a type of the brevity of human existence, the mayfly might well excite human envy as endowed with a placidity, for all but a mere fraction of its existence, which humanity may envy in vain.

Placidity is certainly not the prevailing state among fishermen when the mayfly is either up or due. When the hatch is fitful, patchy, or subdued by cold winds there is a quiet indeed, but one which verges on exasperation. When the air above the river is filled with drifting duns,

or dancing and collapsing spinners, most anglers will be racked by expectation or disappointment, or thrilled, if they are lucky, by long-dreamed-of success, but scarcely ever serene. Mayflies haunt waters rich in fish-food, of which they themselves form no small part; and it follows that the dimpled surfaces above which they swarm conceal trout both numerous and bulky. No other natural trout-fly has quite the same gift of arousing from the depths of the river or lake not merely the whole trout population, but huge and wary experts which at other times seldom rise to a fly. Few fishermen could probably confess with honesty to indifference when, on some balmy day when the tarnished may-blossom is falling and the flag-spikes are swelling, he sees suddenly rise to his own fly—or alas! more often to one of Nature's originals—a pair of jaws vast but not disproportionate to the shoulders behind them, or catches a glimpse of a head-and-tail rise showing a back fin that suggests to his startled consciousness a boat's sail.

Notoriously some trout-fishermen decry such nervous crises, as though in dread of heart failure. They denounce the uncertainty of the mayfly's emergence and the trout's response, and point, with some measure of justice, to the usual dull time, after the mayfly have vanished, when the trout decline to pay much attention to other flies. Sometimes this denunciation of the mayfly may be affected; it is a common weakness to repudiate satisfaction in what others enjoy. When it is sincere it usually seems based either on a preference for routine enjoyment over the thrills of adventure, or else to a sobering though unexpressed conviction that the available water holds few fish of exceptional size. Mayfly fishers may appreciate the latter motive, even if they cannot sympathize with the former; but, with a grim recollection of misadventures at mayfly time, they will be content if they are spared a reference to

"the duffer's fortnight"—a misrepresentation of the mayfly season as gross as the description of wet-fly fishing as the "chuck and chance it" school.

## WEEDS ON THE LAWN

With the welcome growths of summer come its weeds, and face the gardener with some delicate questions of policy. Against the herbs which Nature sprinkles in his flower and vegetable beds with an all too liberal hand he has no choice but to wage war without respite; but for his labour with hoe and fingers the unprofitable plants for which Nature shows so strong a bias will choke out those of his own choice, whether they minister to the delight of the eye or to his comfort at table. But in the wild fringes of the garden there is room for a more liberal discrimination; and the division of wild vegetable life into sheep and goats is still more difficult upon the lawn. In many new gardens, especially in those on dry, light soils, "lawn" is an elastic term, to be interpreted with a certain charity. For the first season or two, and, above all, when spring has been arid and summer fiery, the makers of new gardens have sometimes been secretly grateful when the native sands or gravels that have scarcely known grass since they were first laid down by some primitive deluge have been veiled by verdure of any kind. In such a destitution of herbage even the knot-grass makes a pretence that is cheering, and a thistle-pad is luxuriant.

From these depths of the gardener's subjection to Nature's frowns it is a relief to turn to a more typical English garden, where lawns are dense with herbage and blossom and the chief problem is one of selection. Perfect lawns should notoriously consist only of grass, and of grass in the most velvety of its many species and phases. Even in such holy

places of lawn-making as Oxford and Cambridge few lawns pass such a test; and, where turf of the first quality is demanded for the niceties of bowl-playing, it has often to be renewed after a few seasons.

Most lawn-owners would shrink from an immediate determination that only grass should grace their lawns, and for them the question is how many types of wild flowers and herbage to include in the first proscription. Compared with him who sees the hungry knot-grass loop its dingy sprays, happy is he who has arrayed against him even the spreading plantain and the flaunting dandelion. They at least speak of some goodness in the soil; it is for the owner to prevent them from monopolizing it. On lawns open to pastures on all sides it may be long before the wind-borne seeds of many of the grosser aliens cease to disfigure the clipped sward. The lawn-lover's and the farmer's tastes in turf are notoriously not the same, especially when a grass court still harbours lawn tennis. The same white clover which the farmer treasures is for the lawn tennis player an occasion of falling, and of decorating inappropriate parts of his person with a stain like that of the Green Man on an inn sign. Where lawn tennis is no longer played on a lawn, clover may well be spared until the war begins to be waged, in its later years, with victory smiling ever nearer, on the lesser blemishes. Chief among these are daisies, which for all their alert-eyed freshness on a June morning have no true place in the sober and restrained extent of a finished lawn.

After all flowering plants, or plants which fail to reach the stage of flowering, have been eradicated, there remains for the instructed epicure in lawn tendance the lynx-eyed and almost inexhaustible joy of pursuing with a daisy-fork, worn and polished by years of effort, the last furtive plumelet of aromatic yarrow, or of that prunella which all but acquires under persecution the gift of invisibility.

# ON LAWNS

It is in June that lawns come into their own. In winter we mentally put them away, as we put away, with an annual wistfulness which southern peoples cannot understand, a thousand summer things. Then the grass pales and stiffens to a ground-wind; the lawn, under the sameness of frost or snow, shares the common oblivion of the countryside. Autumn leaves give it a desolate air, and, even in spring, when all else becomes suddenly alive, it awakes but slowly. Little by little it puts on its beauties, its firmness, its colour. As we move across it, the mower's great parallels sweep round us in long perspective, like the caulking of a deck.

A lawn has, indeed, many of the qualities of a ship. It has an air of being stripped, and lean and alive. Adornments spoil it, giving to it the mournful air of a schooner adapted to a landsman's comfort, or of a horse in a beribboned sunbonnet. Flower-beds themselves, if their position be ill-judged, somehow mar its dignity, and, when dusk gathers, the flash of scarlet or blue or yellow assaults its quietness as a tinkling tune might assault an elegy. Because all day this place has been so full of gold and the flicker of gold, because voices have rung across it that come now like a remote echo from distant windows, the lawn has become a part of evening itself. Elsewhere, we may go lightly through the cooled air, and watch the flowers bow in the night-breeze, and hear the hedge-bird wake, and break loose, and swirl into the gloom. All this we may do with no drop of mood from that which was ours when, indoors, a dress sparkled in the lamp-light and a well-turned phrase held all the wit of the world. But on the lawn itself the footfall is hushed; over it the sky stands

open, upon it the moon lies flat. It has so fallen asleep that we dare not disturb it.

As if touched by a hand, we look up suddenly; the spaces rush out from us, leaving us isolated; and we remember how she who told her strange adventure in *The Turn of the Screw* stood gazing at night from a window of the old tower and saw, with sick terror, "little Miles" looking up from the lawn. Nor can we forget how all that tale was first told. "I remember the time and the place—the corner of the lawn, the shade of the great beeches, and the long, hot summer afternoon. It wasn't a scene for a shudder, but, oh——!"

And, as these things flow into the mind, the lawn takes magic. It has the hurt of all beauty; it has a loneliness that makes us a little sorry to desert it, a little afraid to stay. "There's heavy dew," we whisper, smiling at our own excuse. "Yes," some one answers. "There's chill in the air." So we escape, cheating unaccountable fears. At sunrise the very dew from which we flee will glisten between pale shadows, and, looking upon it, we shall laugh to remember how terror came near to us in a place which is now so bright. And yet, where but on the lawn should we, as children, have looked for fairies? Perhaps, deep within us, the old belief endures unexpressed. We have no need to be ashamed of it. To have respect for fairies is to prove that in ourselves the Princess, or the love of her, endures, and that all the nursery's cargo of magic—which is, after all, the original cargo—has not been bartered for food and drink. And a lawn, for all our grown-up pretence, remains a giant nursery, where we may, in fairies' company, laugh at top hats and mock them with invisible daisy-chains.

## SCENT IN FLOWERS

It is a fact, whatever the reason may be that we value scent in flowers less than our forefathers did. Parkinson has a whole vocabulary of his own about scent, words so precise and vivid that they must come of precise and vivid experience. He describes bad smells with as much relish as good ones, and all our older poetry is full of the scent of flowers. Fletcher (or Shakespeare) speaks of roses "not royal in their smells alone, but in their hue," as if the scent came first for most people; but now we produce and praise and give prizes to scentless roses and even carnations, which to our ancestors would have seemed like beautiful women without brains, while many of our favourite garden flowers, such as the dahlia, the begonia, the larkspur, have no scent at all, or none that adds pleasure. There are even sweet peas and varieties of mignonette that smell less than they should; and musk seems to have given up smelling, as if in disgust at our insensibility. It may be that we have actually a duller sense of smell than our forefathers; or it may be that florism, to coin a needed word, so possesses our minds that we can think of nothing but size and colour, preferring always the largest size and the loudest colour.

But however this may be, in our neglect of scents we lose an exquisite and imaginative pleasure. For scent is the most imaginative of all the senses, in that it can create for us so much of what the other senses perceive. The scent of lavender, however faintly borne, means lavender itself in its growth and colour and form; means even the garden in which it grows. It carries its own world with it, and lavender-scented sheets are sweet with the sweetness of Nature itself, while there are scents, preferred by ladies,

which are as sophisticated as over-fashionable clothes and as quickly tired of.

The scent of some flowers seems to express the very season of the year. There is early spring itself in the scent of the primrose, and the later, richer spring in the scent of the cowslip. Sometimes, too, there is a delicious mixture of both in yellow polyanthuses, and there are yellow auriculas that smell like glorified cowslips, if cowslips could be increased in glory.

But many people do not know that certain sweet flowers have a scent at all, so unused are they to the discovery and enjoyment of scent. The viola, for instance, is not commonly grown for its scent, and some kinds have little or none; but others, such as Maggie Mott, have a delicate, delicious odour for which they would be worth growing and picking even if they said nothing to the eye. And then there are tulips, especially certain yellow ones, that are honey-sweet if we take the trouble to smell into them. But the tulip makes such a show, as we say, that no one expects to find that other shy virtue in it, and seldom is any particular kind praised in books or catalogues for its scent. Then there are plants that have a scent not so much sweet as full of character, such as the snapdragon, which reminds one of apples, or the phlox, which reminds one, perhaps, of walnuts; and there is sweet william, with its homely cottage smell. All of these are delightful to those who have any epicurism in smells; a harmless pleasure, for one cannot over-smell as one can over-eat or drink. There are scents for the garden that are over-sweet, perhaps, for the house, scents which one ought to take in passing, when they are like Heaven—the scent of lilies of the valley, of narcissi, of lilac. A garden without all these in their turn is like loud orchestral music without melody, or like wit without kindness, or beauty without sense.

## TRIAL BY WATER

There is a property in rivers and in the sea which enables them to throw men's faults and virtues into sharp relief. The fact is obvious enough on ocean voyages. No sooner do they pass up a liner's gangway than the scandalmongers multiply their scandals, backbiters their backbiting, busybodies their business. People of charm, on the other hand, seem to multiply their charms. They have leisure to be delightful, they cast care into the sea and they move across the decks with a springiness that would astonish their friends on shore. But people who are by nature fools have in great ships an unrivalled opportunity for an exhibition of their foolishness. They can quarrel more readily, get in the way more frequently, and be unconsciously ridiculous with more magnificent effect than anywhere else. The lady whose natural tendency it is to attack with enmity all men in authority who will not submit to her tutelage treats the ship's officers as at home she treats the vicar and his curate, disputing points of seamanship and discipline as hotly and as ignorantly as she disputes the details of ritual. Youth that is youth no longer is tempted towards undignified flirtation and inappropriate hats; romance, that can never again be romantic, exhibits its last, despairing flicker; spite, which evaporates in a provincial town, becomes spite at close quarters, concentrated and venomous. While they remain at sea all landsmen, for good or for evil, are caricatures of themselves.

Nor is it necessary to voyage many miles in order to submit human nature to its trial by water. The banks of the Thames, the waters of the Solent, the Norfolk Broads produce instantly the same effect of caricature. Nothing

so effectively exhibits the coarseness, or the effeminacy, or the stupidity of a face as a yachting-cap; nothing so swiftly reveals a man's true proportions as a seaman's double-breasted monkey-jacket fastened, with brass buttons, round his civilian form. The punts, canoes, rowing-boats at Slackham-on-Thames betray a thousand secrets of character which are never revealed in the ordinary traffic of life.

A punt, by its simplicity, lays overwhelming emphasis upon any tendency its occupants may have towards vulgar over-elaboration. It should be brought quietly down river; she who propels it will be frocked simply, her movement will have an easy grace, and as she is seen against the drifting background of Oxfordshire meadows the river will have shown at its best all that is good in her. Behind her comes a fretful and panting motor-boat. Its enamel gleams an opulent newness. It has an awning, with scallops and fringes, set rigidly on gilt stanchions. Inside is a serried luncheon party. White waistcoats bulge in rows like plates in a plate-rack; jewelled ear-rings glitter on swarthy skins; wicker armchairs, gilded, too, overflow with embroidered women and tasselled cushions; round them are barricades of food and crates of drink. A red ensign droops over the stern. They pass down river with the gesture of Cleopatra; for them the Thames, like life itself, is always a stream-de-luxe. The water gurgles at them, the Oxfordshire meadows laugh at their scarlet and magenta cushions, and the punt rocks in their majestic wash. They would be harmless vulgarians ashore; only the river reflects them, a little fiercely, in its satirical mirror.

# THE DECK-CHAIR

As the days "draw out" towards midsummer we incline, both physically and temperamentally, to the deck-chair. A temptation born ostensibly in the enforced indolence of a sea voyage, it has recently thrust itself into our daily life. Wherever one goes nowadays—in parks, on heaths and commons, in every kind of garden, public and private, upon every sea beach around our coasts and upon the top of most cliffs, around every bandstand, and in the porches of the busiest hotels—the deck-chair has become an essential of the social landscape. It is one of those minor indulgences which especially distinguish modern youth from that of an elder generation. The deck-chair for general purposes was practically unknown to the earlier and even to the later Victorian age. When one gazes at the statues of the men of the "stove-pipe" period, the dignity of whose personalities has in so many cases survived even their accredited costume, one finds it difficult to conceive that they can ever have yielded to the seduction of a deck-chair. Disraeli, of course, who took so naturally to the hookah and divan upon his early travels, was an exception to every rule. The crinoline alone would have precluded all use of the deck-chair by the grandmothers of many of its present occupants.

Memory suggests that, until the long-shore popularization of the hammock towards the end of the last century, out-of-door comfort of any sort was regarded as almost indecorous. A rough garden seat of wood or stone or wrought iron, or curule throne regarded strictly as part of the architectural scheme—with here and there a cane-bottomed or wicker-work make-shift pillaged against all protest

from within doors—leniency would seldom farther go than this. Cushions had to do the rest. The adjustment of these, by the manner of which so much could be expressed, was admittedly a gallant and delicate ritual. Our modern novelists have good reason to deplore its loss. It may be set down, however, without much danger of refutation, that the game of croquet in its heyday—not to mention lawn tennis in its prime—was watched in circumstances of more or less acute discomfort.

It is to be doubted if even in the matter of character the deck-chair's apparent concession to lassitude has on the whole a weakening influence. Our deck-chair devotees are certainly not less vigorous when occasion demands than a generation which regarded a horse-hair sofa with moral mistrust. No one can say that our modern girls are less hardy, less athletic, less capable of enduring strain and privation through their addiction to the deck-chair. There is hardly a single masculine sport but is carried on with greater energy now than it was.

The truth about the deck-chair seems to be that we have discovered the value for all classes of intensified rest for both mind and body, in the open air and in the presence of just enough visual interest to distract but not to disturb. It is only when one has completely thrown over control of what used to be called "the centre of gravity" that true repose of mind is possible. An entirely new mood is induced—a mood of reverie, of content, of unhurried anticipation. Deck-chair conversation assumes a new quality. One is at leisure for one's companion to make his full statement. One does not confront him as an antagonist. One addresses him only by rebound from an infinitely distant point on the horizon. A pause before reply affords, accordingly, no nervous exasperation. The angle at which one sees the world from a deck-chair, whether the purview be sea or land, or men and women "as trees walking,"

puts one outside the range of active competition and assertion. Hence the impersonality of the deck-chair dreamer—not that of the fussy sophist but of the care-free poet-philosopher.

Whether it is an ideal reading chair is to be doubted. It does not favour that constant redressing of attention needed by imposed study. It has a merit for light literature—chiefly in the shortness of the distance that the book has to fall. A perception of certain indefinable graces in music and movement is a faculty peculiarly inspired by a deck-chair. Perhaps these are hints of a universal beauty, only granted to those who are apparently inactive, yet all the more conscious of being "whirled round in earth's diurnal course."

## A DAY'S CRICKET

Still there are some who say with unnecessary modesty that they never watch cricket because they know little or nothing about it. Perhaps they have been overawed by the frown of experts who declare that no seat is worth having from which it is not possible to observe the break of the ball; perhaps they are deterred by an excess of domestic enthusiasm which has led conversation, too often for their own uninstructed taste, on to the subject of averages and "records" and county prospects Knowing themselves unfit and certainly unwilling to take part in these debates, they write themselves off as ignorant laymen, and conclude that a cricket field is no place in which they may find their entertainment. Then, one day when the sun shines and a friend almost as ignorant as themselves is successfully persuasive, they make an experiment which proves to them that their conclusion was false and that many of the chief pleasures of watching cricket are indepen-

dent of a deep knowledge of the game. For cricket, in so far as any explanation of it is necessary, explains itself; the old story of three sticks and one stick is easy reading, and its technical footnotes may with little loss be disregarded. A lazy spectator may take it as leisurely as he pleases, and, if his eye grows tired of watching the batsmen, he may always find in his surroundings, in the simple fact of being at a cricket match, pleasure of a sort that no angrier contest provides.

A cricket pitch, he will discover as his attention wanders from the game itself, lies at the centre of a world of its own. Those who enter that world seem to leave their cares with their shillings at the turnstile. No one talks of politics when a wicket is needed or of the money market when a batsman opens his shoulders for a six. No one quarrels on any subject more serious than the accuracy or inaccuracy of a cricket reminiscence, and no one fears for any future but that which the scoring board will presently unfold. Even those whose ordinary habit is gloomily to compare the present with the past are satisfied when they have found some one to agree with them that pitches nowadays are too much like billiard tables and that there are too many intervals for luncheon and tea.

Audiences of football matches sometimes share so fiercely in the heat of the conflict that they are uncomfortable neighbours for anyone who is not a partisan; but cricket audiences are seldom heated by anything worse than the sun, which, even while it draws from them sighs for refreshment and awnings, warms them with a grateful sense that the gods are attendant upon their pleasures. "This," they say while they mop their foreheads, "is the right weather for a day's cricket," and they let the day wear on in peace, staring at the quiet green and the white flannels that move and flicker on it, as if there were no such things in the world

as haste or hatred and no rivalries but those that two elevens may decide.

The ignorant experimenter in the watching of cricket may be forced to admit, when evening falls, that the incidents of the day's play, which others so eagerly discuss, have left but a light impression upon his mind. He may even have to bear the laughter of experts who declare that so inattentive a spectator wastes his time; but in his own heart he will not feel that time has been wasted which has carried him away from the animosities and ordinary competition of the world. It is as if one might visit a desert island on the top of an omnibus, and for the expenditure of a shilling. And very soon, if cricket, as we believe, has the magic that its admirers claim for it, he that made his first journey with the air of a detached philosopher seeking escape will find himself making the same journey again and again, because he, too, is become an enthusiast. Before the end of the season he may learn to discourse as learnedly as his grandchildren on the break of a ball and the artistry of a batsman's feet. The green island with its fifteen inhabitants in white, will cast its spell over his indifference, his modesty, and his unbelief.

## STRAWBERRIES

To the larger woes of a distracted world a correspondent has added a vicious twinge. "Many years," he wrote, "must have passed since such a poor crop of strawberries as the present one was gathered." We could all have told him that. There was the drought, for one thing. There was the difficulty of getting enough straw for another. And there were the birds. Is this their gratitude for all the legal enactments, the moderation in the stock of domestic cats, the bird-boxes, bird-tables, bird-baths,

bird-sanctuaries—all the care that of recent years has been lavished upon them ? Did we yearn over the blackbirds' fluting in March, only to find that on a July dawn a troop of the bandits had found a hole in a perfectly good new net and ravished, before we were up, every one of the few decent berries that we had intended for our own breakfast ? And now, if we are patient enough to read on, we learn of eel-worms and "red plants." All nature, it seems, has conspired together to rob us of our strawberries ; and—let us rave as loud as the Sieur de Baudicourt when he heard that there were no eggs—there is still a lack of strawberries at the fruiterers', and in our own beds a net that mocks us, a little futile straw, and no berries.

Let us console ourselves with the pleasures of memory and imagination. Memory will take many of us back to days when the only strawberries really worth eating were those picked from the straw, with the sun on the leaves. It is a pleasure denied to middle-age because middle-age is too conscious of the small of its back to be happy in stooping, rising, stooping, rising, and too dignified or timorous to eat in the correct and easy attitude, the attitude in which Riquet once approached M. Bergeret, the attitude so frequent (if memory may be trusted) in *The Last of the Mohicans*, the attitude of the snake in the grass and the small boy in the strawberry bed.

At a bound memory flies to a stately banquet in a great hotel, and to *fraises Melba*—a dainty to which Dame Nellie seemed indeed to have lent the quality of her voice. And then (perhaps through the magic of the beautiful French name for an ecstasy to which we, with English shyness, give a grosser name) away to a terraced garden in the South, and heaped bowls of *fraises de bois*, and long bottles of white wine, and people who between mouthfuls can reckon up a dozen or more of different ways to eat them, in not one of which is there any hint of cream.

With wholesome national prejudice we, for our part, plead that, in the English climate at any rate, cream is the perfect companion for strawberries—Devonshire cream if the fates are kind, but, failing that, any cream that comes from the cow.

Yet, even while we lean towards the stodgy, here comes another memory to make us wonder whether even *fraises de bois* are not a little on the gross side. It is a memory of a Sussex garden where, amid the gorse and the birch trees in the "wilderness," the little English wild strawberry has been left alone to flourish, and now yields basket upon basket of tiny berries, even in the years when its pampered neighbours, for all their straw and netting and care, are barren. These must be eaten out of doors, with no cream, with no ceremony, and (if only we have patience to wait until they are truly ripe—brown in hue rather than red) with as little as possible of the sugar which can improve the texture but may easily spoil the taste. Thus diving into the waves of memory, we can easily understand why dukes have strawberry leaves in their coronets, and why the presence (or the absence) of a strawberry mark on the left arm is an infallible proof of birth. There are people, we believe, who declare that they cannot eat strawberries; strawberries give them gout. That can only be because they have never eaten enough strawberries.

## ON CHOIR TREATS

In the language of children the word "treat" has a meaning that is beyond the lexicographers—a meaning so rich, so various, so full of personal hopes and wonders that no general definition can encompass it. This, perhaps, is a reason for many failures which precise elders find it difficult to understand. Did they not do for the children exactly

what was done last year, and the year before, and the year before that? Did they not pack them into the same wagonettes, drive them through the same country, instruct them in the same daisy chains, and nourish them with the same tea? As they drove home might they not have sung the same songs and blown cheerfully upon similar penny-whistles? Yet, though everything seemed the same, something was changed. The songs were half-hearted and the whistles a trifle melancholy. When small, dusty feet climbed down at last from the wagonettes, there were, indeed, the usual cheers for the Vicar and the Misses Kindly who had organized the day, but were not the cheers themselves polite rather than enthusiastic, and did not the dusty feet set out homeward with unusual alacrity? Something was wrong. The treat, so carefully planned, so conscientiously executed, had fallen flat. You might almost have thought that it had not been a treat at all.

The Misses Kindly all the world over, and with them parents and uncles who plan treats for their own nurseries, are always liable to be confronted with such a misfortune. Those with dull minds, who will, perhaps, never give a real treat for all their trying, seek an explanation in material things, telling themselves that the jam may not have been to the children's liking, or that the day was too hot. Yet it is of no use to lay the blame on Providence or on the grocer. Any jam tastes sweet in the spoon of adventure, and almost any weather will do to eat it in. If the Misses Kindly would know the truth, they must look for it, not in the skies or on the cloth they diligently spread for tea, but under the pillows of children who are dreaming of treats remembered and treats to come. Who dare say what they will find there? Who dare guess, if the lexicographers cannot, what perfect treat the Junior Treble covets during the sermon and imagines when the candle's out?

Whatever else it may be, it is certainly not a matter of routine. That wagonette, that daisy chain, those penny-whistles—has not custom staled them, have they not taken to themselves an almost official colour which is the colour of tedium? Besides, the presence of the Vicar in the last wagonette is a little suggestive of his presence in the last rank of the procession from the vestry; however pleasant a man he may be, one does not ordinarily choose one's professional chief as a companion in adventure. How much more fun it would be to be taken out by, say, the doctor in his motor-car or by Miss Casual in her pony-cart! How much better it would be if there was no time-table drawn up by the elder Miss Kindly and no scheme of games devised by her ingenious sister!

The Junior Treble is not ungrateful. He is prepared to reward the Misses Kindly with the cheer which he has learnt to regard as the appropriate Amen to the annual choir treat. But for himself he would prefer to leave more to chance, to be organized a little less and allowed to run wild a little more. So he would discover his own secrets and explore his own romance. Of course he knows well enough that, if it is to be a treat at all, some one must convey him and feed him and bring him back. There is bound to be some one to say "don't" now and then. That he can bear. He is no anarchist, but there are moments when he likes a change of government. And if anyone is to say "don't" during his treat, he would like it to be Miss Casual. Unfortunately, however, this lady is seldom much concerned with the choir.

## BATHING

As midsummer approaches bathing ceases to be an experiment in asceticism and becomes a general pleasure. In a normal season in this climate neither fresh nor salt water absorbs enough of the sun's heat to be agreeable for human immersion before May at the very earliest; it should then retain the accumulated warmth until nearly the end of September. Dr. Johnson bathed at Brighton in October; but that was a rather untimely enterprise, which seems to have approved itself to him less as a pleasurable indulgence than as a rather drastic medical remedy. It is indeed only lately that the hedonistic aspect of total immersion has eclipsed the therapeutic, and that people go bathing not on the excuse that it is good for them, but frankly because they enjoy it. Perhaps owing to this lessened respect for the tonic properties of sea-salt, fresh-water bathing has become notably more popular in recent years, and outdoor-swimming baths are becoming almost as common in towns with access to rivers as baths of the old indoor type.

It is a little curious that this growing popularity of bathing has coincided with the increasing disuse of the regular morning cold tub. That masculine habit of the last two generations—it is hardly older—is being killed among those over school age by the multiplication of hot-water pipes in all houses which are modern, or modernized. That a generation which almost abjures the shock of cold water in bathroom or bedroom should readily face it on cold grass, among shivering willows or under a draughty sky, may fairly be accepted as telling against the hardening theories of upbringing, and as supporting the view that a

reasonable indulgence produces enterprise rather than effeminacy.

Only the winter swimmers in the Serpentine, whom others admire rather than envy, could fairly reproach with degenerate softness those men and maidens who make a practice of bathing daily in the morning even in an English June. On mornings when nature is not in sympathy with the enterprise, sea-bathing can be yet grimmer than bathing in rivers or lakes. The waves are fiercer, the wind careers more freely, the shingle pounds the ankles under water, and is sharper to stand upon in the cold air.

From actual dangers the sea-bather in this country is comparatively free. High seas are an advertised peril, and the loss of life from undertow and other treacherous currents is probably not so great as from the subtler danger of clinging weeds in summer rivers and lakes. None of these risks should be ignored even by good swimmers; and all who bathe ought to learn to swim. But British seas and streams have few of the more aggressive and hungry forms of aquatic life which in some other lands may agitate the bather. Thames backwaters contain no alligators, and even the swimming grass-snake which may inspire the unversed in our fauna with tremulous thoughts of Laocoon is incapable of harm. The sharks of our coasts are either dog-fish too small to attack man, or else the basking-shark which is bulky but good-natured. Even the little weever-fishes, with their poisonous spines and habit of lying hidden in wet sand, strangely seldom do harm; and the bather with a taste for adventure must travel much farther than the Channel Islands before he is likely to meet an octopus of the size and manners described by Victor Hugo.

# ON PUNTS

Though *ponto*, its classical ancestor, served a military or even a commercial purpose, a punt is now a vessel dedicated to ease and pleasure. Sometimes, while term endures, it is said to be perverted on Cam and Isis to scholarly uses, but there is good reason to doubt the seriousness of the perversion. It is true that earnest students are to be seen going down to the river with books under their arms and that, at the day's end, these volumes are discovered among the cushions; it is true also that, as one goes upstream, the eye encounters now and then a learned work held aloft by a reader of whom nothing is visible but the hands, the knees, and the pipe-smoke; but experience teaches us that on these occasions learning is often so softened by the lapping of water, the twittering of birds, and the drowsiness of the summer air that it ceases to be learning at all. Real work is generally done in circumstances more austere. In saying that a punt is now a vessel of pleasure and of ease, we need fear no destructive contradiction from gentlemen whose labour, preparatory to their Schools, is customarily performed in *pontone*.

Certainly in Commem. Week punts are untroubled by active scholarship. Many who enter them have already done their best and worst for the Examiners, and enjoy, in their earned repose, the delights of finality. Others, though they worked yesterday and have sworn that, when they go home, they will begin an industrious vacation, do not dream of work to-day. A punt, therefore, becomes a symbol of the present tense. Within it, for all but the punter, whose cares are muscular, the past and future are shut out, so that to him who chooses this as his place of

retreat it does indeed seem that the vessel wherein he lies moves beneath an enchantment. He stares skyward and sees nothing but the sky or branches that are a pattern with the clouds; he listens, and hears nothing but the rhythmical grinding of a slave's punt-pole in the gravelly bed; he feels, and feels nothing but the sun upon him and the gentle movement of his vessel's thrust and slackening; he speaks lazily, and it is ten to one that no voice, even lazily, will answer him.

This is a suspension of life within life, and if he is wise he will not yield himself to sleep; for sleep in a punt is like sleep elsewhere—an admission of dreams and perhaps of trouble. But it may be that, by no will of his, his eyes close themselves, and the peculiar circumstances of that afternoon are thus for a time surrendered. He sees himself again, in dark clothing and a gown, doing battle with unanswerable questions to which an examiner has attached the star that admits of no alternative, or, dragged on into the threatening future, he stumbles and is dumb in a *viva voce* fantastically named. How great, then, is the joy of awakening to find himself once more in his enchanted punt, where only the present lives and the present is a delight! There is no movement now. The punt is made fast to a willow-stump, and on a green bank feminine slaves, who have had the heart not to disturb him, are preparing tea. No tea has ever tasted more delicious or been served by fairer hands; no day has ever moved more peacefully towards evening. The river, though not yet can it be said to darken, draws over itself a silvery metallic sheath as the hours pass; the meadows awaken to an intenser green towards sunset; the foliage flutters a little in a new breeze. But in the stream, as they drop back through the locks towards the bridges, no breeze is perceptible. There is a stillness which even speech seems not to interrupt.

Now the punt, which had once a magic of the present, casts a subtler spell over future and past, and he who drifts in it begins to perceive that he and his companions are not the "modern" beings he had supposed them to be, but are creatures in a continuing procession who change their clothes and their manners but are themselves little changed. Is that discovery glad or melancholy? He scarcely knows; but knows that it invests life with a gentleness, a dignity, a smooth inevitability which for him it has sometimes lacked. Before he came down to the river he was, to use his own phrase, "rattled" by the pressure of a thousand confused anxieties. Even the pleasures of Commem. Week had seemed a series of engagements recorded in a busy notebook; there had been little beauty in them. Now, when some one speaks in anticipation of the dance of that evening, he sees an enduring romance, an age-old joy and sadness, beneath even the joyless stridency of modern tunes. What is of the moment ugly he may forget, and what of all time beautiful he is able to remember. When the punt is at last surrendered he carries away from it peace within him as lightly as the cushions under his arm.

## SLEEPING OUT OF DOORS

By August the nights grow perceptibly longer and darker, yet no colder; and this conjunction is extremely favourable for sleeping out of doors. Only a very sound sleeper will expect to be undisturbed on his, or her, first night on a camp-bed in the garden if the experiment is made before midsummer. Dawn comes before the glow of sunset seems done with; and precisely that early morning hour when rest is sweetest to weary mortals is chosen by birds for their most vociferous outbursts of song. Now daybreak

wakes hardly a cry from the birds distempered by the moulting season; and, if the silence of the cuckoo and song-thrush, and even the nightingale, is sometimes welcome to sleepers within walls, it is a double advantage to those who set up their beds in the very stalls of the outdoor opera-house. Just as the coldest weather comes when the days are lengthening, so the hottest is due when night already spreads a darker curtain, and this too is a recommendation of sleeping outdoors in August. Before the northern hemisphere becomes steeped in accumulated warmth, even the warmest day is apt to be followed by a surprisingly penetrating chill when the dawn-wind rises. By August, though dawn still brings its mysterious refreshment, the fall of temperature is less marked, and the outdoor sleeper is much less likely to wake with a shiver about three in the morning and wonder what he found wrong with his bed indoors.

Few English houses, except hospitals, are built with provision for sleeping in balconies or verandahs, because our own climate, unlike that of America, is not hot enough to make the arrangement convenient in most summers for healthy people. The decision to sleep out of doors thus becomes for us a mild domestic adventure. Much as admirals are said sometimes to be seasick on first returning to sea, so the most experienced outdoor sleeper is wont to have his rest rather broken on the first roofless night, even in the silence of August. The sounds of darkness are more mysterious for the prevailing stillness. Though reason declares that those unaccountable rushings and brushings in the sweet-pea bed can be caused by neither puma nor python, speculation how they can possibly be caused by anything so pedestrian as a hedgehog is almost as effective in dispelling sleep. The uncanny nocturnal agility of this creature supplies one of the strongest arguments for sleeping out of doors on a bed raised on

legs, and not on the mere mattress which is otherwise convenient.

But heaven as well as earth conspires to make the first night restless. In a clear sky the stars loom immense and majestic, making slumber in their presence seem disrespectful, if not vaguely dangerous. We feel an instinct which helped to make men cave-dwellers. If the sky, on the other hand, is cloudy, there is the more prosaic apprehension of coming rain.

The restlessness of unfamiliarity soon passes; even on the second night out of doors the night air adds a double invigoration to sleep, and the slow passage of one star across the tree-tops between our first and second slumber is mysteriously sedative. Even a heavy summer dew is little disturbing to the experienced outdoor sleeper. If there is a dew, it will be cold enough for a thick blanket, and, since dew does not fall like rain, but condenses, and has thus little penetrative power, all that is necessary is to avoid rolling the outside of the blanket inwards. The prospect of rain is almost negligible, once an English summer turns obstinately dry; but if drops should fall there is a fine discretion in postponing retreat from the garden until the moment when it is clear that they are in earnest and will not drift away as lightly as they came. On the chance of a night turning wet, it is wise to keep the indoor bedroom ready as a refuge. As it receives its accustomed owner while the storm pounds down, it will have an attraction which was unsuspected when it expelled him by its stuffy heat. Just as coming home again should be among the pleasures of a good holiday, so one of the recommendations of sleeping in the garden is that we end it with a juster recognition of the comforts of indoor life.

# NOMADS

Many theories have waxed and waned as to the essentials of what has come to be known as the "holiday spirit." Up to the present, however, nearly all have been based upon a comparatively shallow study of recent phases. The idea of holidays is commonly treated as opposed to the idea of work, though it is a commonplace that nine people out of ten work harder in this pursuit than they would consent to do for any other purpose. The idea of a "complete change" is another hardy fallacy. *Cœlum non animum mutant.* So forcible is the limitation as often to exclude that very sky which can be admittedly changed by those who run across the seas. How shall we use the word "change" as an adequate test when the bulk of so-called holiday-makers prefer, in all circumstances, to be surrounded by their own friends, to speak their own language, to demand the food and drink to which they are accustomed, to play the games they have played throughout the rest of the year, to make a golf-links of the desert and a dancing-floor of the deck, and to fill out the intervals with eternal gossip about mutual acquaintances?

Equally false would seem to be a suggestion that hunger for knowledge is responsible for a tendency to movement at this time. The visiting of cathedrals and picture-galleries and other "memorials and things of fame," under the guidance of itinerant lecturers, is held by some to be a holiday-phenomenon. But is it exclusively so? The social advantage of having something to talk about for the rest of the year may be as vitally concerned as either the need of holiday or the quest of learning. Often, moreover, the "personally conducted" sightseer has made less

of previous opportunities to master his subject than he who treads a lonelier path or has to find all his information nearer home. Shakespeare's knowledge of Venice almost persuades us he must have been there. Defoe's footsteps are still sought for in the Tobago he never saw. It may be granted that Herodotus was a sightseer in the grain. Whether he counted himself " on holiday " in his journeyings is quite another matter.

Against all these explanations might be set a call of the blood which has nothing to do with work, or rest. or knowledge, or " change " for its own sake, or any of the reasons generally given for holiday-migration. In a measure, at any rate, holidays can and do offer a certain fulfilment of that nomad instinct which our race has exemplified all through its history. The caravanner of the moment may be in more than semblance a throw-back to " the days when we went gipsying," not in single " trailers " along the Surrey by-roads, but in tribes and nations throughout those far-off centuries of pastoral trekking across the plains of Europe. Any notion that the bright-eyed romany is the only, or even the chief, repository of an impulse for " fresh woods and pastures new " is, in many aspects, wide of the mark. The wanderlust of the true nomad was born of practical necessity, as surely as the migration of the birds themselves. It remains very especially an Anglo-Saxon characteristic.

Some æons in experience of our climate, and of an agricultural and industrial civilization, have taught us that where a house is obtainable throughout the winter months in these islands it is better than tent or cart, and that the grazing of beasts is not the only means of human sustenance. But let the urgency of business be slackened for any reason, and to how many of us comes the old pastoral urge! The longing of the slum-child, who, with no knowledge of country life whatever, is conscious just

of a desire to be "where the pavement ends," exists through every class and every age. It is the mirage which beckons beyond every sea-horizon. Our Colonies themselves are the result of a racial character which carries its home, its institutions, and its ideals with it wherever it goes. But the most stay-at-home of us have our migratory moments. It is well to yield to them now and again. To realize the importance of giving Nature its complementary bias is to be wise about holidays, as about other things. It will prevent us from overdoing them on the one hand or underrating them on the other. Whether we take to the trackway, like our forefathers, or pitch our tent beneath the doubtful stars, or permit the substantial consolation of a roof over our heads, let us make them a pleasure, lest they become a penance!

## BY TRAIN

The slight mishap one day to an engine of the Cornish express, the two front wheels of which left the line within fifty miles of London, will make some people feel as they would if the horse of their fancy slipped and fell, or the best bat on their side must retire hurt just when he had played himself in. The engine itself, declares fancy, must have been bitterly disappointed and abashed, and little consoled by congratulations on its skill in keeping the line with all the rest of its wheels so that no damage was done to train or passengers. It had lost the ecstasy of the run. It must feel as any man feels who has been thwarted of fine work by a silly little mistake.

The episode wakes anew the admiration, which the motor-car has not yet killed in all bosoms, for these magnificent monsters of mechanical power. Not to have a look at the engine before starting is to lose a great part of the joy of travelling by train. Enthusiasts on the way to or from

Scotland have been known to leave their carriage at a stopping-place in order to see the tired engine taken off, and the fresh one, so docile but so evidently straining to be off and away, coupled on to the hundreds of tons' weight of train which it is to pull. Some men and many boys know the principal engines by name and by class and can identify them at sight. And there are few whom great railway engines do not or could not move to the admiration which almost amounts to affection.

Since the motor-car became popular travellers have become not less but more conscious of the railway engine's impressive charm and of the pleasure of being borne by its majestic power. They know now what the motor-car cannot do, and what the railway train can. For short journeys the motor-car, which goes direct from door to door, starts when the traveller pleases, and stops nowhere except at his desire, is better than the train. To be bound to catch a certain train, to be dropped at the station, to buy tickets, to get the luggage labelled and put into the carriage, to find a convenient seat, to stop at many stations where one has no desire to get out and a great many people are determined to get in, to change, to wait, to "alight" (as the railway companies call it) at last, with the bother of the luggage and a drive all over again—these are trials which make short journeys by train exhausting and disagreeable.

To most people, a long journey by motor-car is exhausting and disagreeable. After the first hundred miles, all except the enthusiastic driver and the hardiest of passengers begin to find that the heaviest and largest car is small and inclined to bounce, the smoothest road is rougher than the well-metalled track, and forty miles an hour a more alarming speed than sixty miles an hour in the train. The longest "non-stop run" (to use once more the queer lingo of the railways) to Devon or to Scotland is made easy,

by the smoothness of the track and the solidity of the coaches, the comfort of the seats (and third-class seats are luxurious to-day compared with the old wooden seats of thirty or forty years ago), and still more by the lulling effect of continuous motion, of which the senses are aware though the bones and the muscles are not.

Few things are more restful at the beginning of a holiday than a long journey in a swift train, during which the traveller, in his corner-seat facing the engine and controlling the window, does not read, nor even think, but watches the country unroll itself, mile after mile, a moving panorama which Bayreuth itself has never matched nor even approached in *Parsifal*. And the lulling effect is almost as great by night as by day. A man must be jaded indeed by travel if he does not feel the thrill of adventure in reaching the station at bed-time and settling into his tiny, cosy bedroom: the strangeness of going to bed in London, to wake in Scotland. After the adventure, if his nerves be sound and his conscience clear, come hours of care-free sleep, broken perhaps by delightful moments of waking, when, without getting up, he can move the blind aside and look out into the unknown night. Now that we take the train from choice, not as a few years back from necessity, the comfort and the delight of railway travelling are impressed anew upon consciousness; and not the engine only but the whole train is seen in the glow of childish memory and of mature love of ease.

## TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

When a train draws up in a railway station those who are already seated in it are subjected to the inquisition of a hundred anxious eyes. Intending passengers, doubtful which compartment to choose, hurry up and down the

platform, hesitate, seize the handle of a door and release it, consult among themselves and finally take the plunge.

What reasons prompted this man, after so much mental debate, to choose ourselves as his travelling companions? There was as much room elsewhere; there was a corner seat to be had next door; the air we breathe is not more fresh than the air in a dozen other compartments. If it was not superior comfort that drew him towards us, the cause of his coming must lie in ourselves. We must be, if not more attractive, at least less repellent than those whom he has inspected, considered, and deliberately passed over. He and all the others who, a few minutes ago, were hesitating on the platform have, consciously or subconsciously, made a psychological selection. In extreme cases the cause of retreat is plain enough. Babies, invalids, and boys with musical instruments in visible action are almost a guarantee against invasion; indeed experienced and churlish travellers have been known to carry with them bundles of human appearance, feeding-bottles, and penny whistles, which, conspicuously displayed, have again and again safeguarded their privacy. But for what reason, when outward things are equal, does a man incline towards one compartment and shun another? What is the swift summary he makes of the features seen dimly through a window? What principles guide his hasty judgment?

It depends, we may suppose, upon his secret purpose. If the train is a race-train and he intends before long to invite his companions to a game of chance and skill, his eye is eager for victims; stolid matrons he will avoid, adventurous youths will beckon him to profit. If, on the other hand, he has in his pocket a folding chess-board with which he proposes to solve a problem on his way to the City, he will scan the train for signs of somnolence and taciturnity. If he wants to read his newspaper, he will

look for a compartment with a complete equipment of newspapers so that no one may be tempted to read the back of his and frown when he dares to move it. If he wishes to talk, he will choose the idle; if to sleep, the tolerant; if to study human nature, a mixed company with spades and buckets and cameras bound upon its holiday.

And since we are the companions he has chosen, suited to his special purpose, we may, so soon as his purpose becomes apparent, judge ourselves in the light of his implied opinion. If his hand goes to a little brown bag and produces a pack of cards, we may know that, at least in outward expression, we are not peculiarly sagacious; if he discloses a chess-board, we may guess that to an inquisitive platform we present an appearance of conversational paralysis; if he sits up and looks and looks and looks at us, as if he were taking notes for a pathological novel, we may write ourselves down for ever as specimens of the abnormal. To be chosen as a travelling companion is, in short, to be made the subject of an illuminating verdict. As the newcomer settles in his corner and stares or glances at us, we are able to see ourselves as at least one other man has seen us.

## MEALS IN THE TRAIN

One of the first truths to be learned from the study of æsthetics is that the nature of the material, the exciting cause, of pleasure goes for very little in the composition of that pleasure. It is what we bring, not what we receive (as Coleridge pointed out in an ode on dejection which is among the finest of hymns to joy) which makes us glad or sorry. An instance of this great philosophical truth is within easy reach of every traveller; and most of us are travellers at some time.

No one—not even the master caterers of the great railway companies, whose new names are still as strange to us as was the wife's new name to the angry husband in *Modern Love*—would lay hand on heart and swear that in respect of quality the meals served in the luncheon cars of our long-distance trains were choice food. Considering the difficulties, they are surprisingly sound; usually well cooked, cleanly dished, and deftly served by obliging waiters, who combine the skill of Cinquevalli and of Blondin with the affability of the old fellow in *You Never Can Tell.* But there is nearly always turbot, or cod—fishes that, when they take the train or stay in a hotel, become as uninteresting, as reserved, as flatly respectable as English travellers themselves. The choice between roast joint hot and pressed beef or ham cold seems no choice at all, but a double compulsion, as of pistols or swords to a timid duellist. And the meal, unlike all other meals, be it luncheon or be it dinner, strikes one as drawing slowly *crescendo* to a climax of sweetish biscuits and gorgonzola cheese. Why is there nearly always gorgonzola cheese in the train; and why does one always eat and enjoy it there, and rarely anywhere else?

We have hit, perhaps, on one of the qualities which we bring of ourselves to the enjoyment of meals in the train. We bring our sense that we are doing something unusual, and we lend it to the usual food. The most frequent traveller (if we except the commercial traveller, who, as a rule, avoids the restaurant-car) has more meals in a house than in the train. There is always a spice of the adventurous, or at least the unfamiliar, in eating while food and fork and mouth and gastric juices are all sensibly moving at half-a-hundred miles an hour. True, railway restaurant-cars are all very much alike; one soon becomes dulled to the difference between white panelling touched with gold and brown panelling inlaid with yellow, and all

restaurant-cars seem to have windows that will neither open nor shut. But still, none of them is our own dining-room; the plates are not our plates; the spoons are not those we use daily. And the adventure reaches its height when we try to pour out our ginger-ale while the train is going over points. And how ready we are for adventure!

While we dutifully work through the turbot, the joint, and the roast potatoes, counting the courses till we reach the sweetish biscuits and the gorgonzola, the world fleets by us; no real world, but a panorama unrolled for our delectation, with no lecturer to interrupt its flow. Some people like to eat to music, which saves them the mental effort of talking. Better than music is the rhythm of the wheels (which men of science declare to be as much our own doing as is the pleasure of railway menus), that rhythm which comes to seem the very tune of the landscape as it circles past our idle, interested eyes, swinging on the pivot of some distant wood or church or hill-top. And there are the stopping-places, always bestowing a thrill which meals in houses cannot give. Will anyone get into our carriage? Will he or she or they see through the sham of the coats and bags which we have arranged with so much artful carelessness on the empty places? Could it be, O horror! that this ordinary-looking station harbours railway thieves who will make off with our hand luggage? Or the train may be making headlong for London; the first suburbs have been already penetrated, and it is a question whether the dinner will be done before the journey. Quick! let us finish our gorgonzola cheese and pay the bill and go. After all, is this restaurant-car really as alluring as we thought?

## THE USE OF GUIDE-BOOKS

We have all met people who hide the redness of their Baedekers in art-linen. This prudery about guide-books is peculiar to the English tourist. Americans have it not because they are not ashamed of being tourists, but glory in the fact. With us it sometimes amounts to a nervous disease. There is something shameful in visiting Florence for the first time; one ought to have been born there, or at least taken there in extreme infancy, so that one cannot remember the time when one was not interested in Alessio Baldovinetti, or could not distinguish at a glance between Luca and Andrea della Robbia. On a first visit to the Uffizi one must behave as if one had just strolled down from Fiesole to look at some old friends. Hence the art-linen, the furtive glances at the information concealed within it, and the substitution of anxiety for a delicious pleasure. Never to have been to Florence before; to see the Dome and the Primavera for the first time —that is a piece of luck that comes only once; and why waste it by pretending that it is not yours?

The pretence is partly the fault of the English who live in Italy and of those who really have been there often. They foster the belief that it is shameful to go there for the first time. They have the habit, if you betray your delight in Florence or the Sacristy of San Lorenzo, of asking you whether you have ever been to some little, far place among the hills, and whether you have seen there the masterpiece of Sasetta. If not—well, you are still a tourist, the kind of person who might buy picture postcards of Raphael's Madonnas or plaster casts of the David.

The way to balk these people is to proclaim yourself a tourist, to flaunt the redness of your Baedeker; and that is also the way to enjoy yourself. For, after all, the twin stars of Baedeker may sometimes be wrongly bestowed, like other Orders, but in the main they are well earned, and Michelangelo's "Night and Morning" are none the worse for having been seen by so many curates. It is plainly impossible for every Englishman to have been born in Florence or to have gone there in remote infancy; and why should you not be one of the multitude who have deferred that pleasure until now? Confess it and you will enjoy yourself with the help of an honest guide-book; conceal it in art-linen and listless behaviour and you will soon grow as listless as you pretend to be; but the art-linen will not make you an artist.

In a place never visited before, whether it be Venice or Viterbo, the use of the guide-book should be free and open. You need not like all it recommends, but you should let it point for you; and usually it will point at the things best worth seeing. Do not flatter yourself that you need no guiding aid, that the judgment of centuries is nothing to you; for all judgment, even of the most fastidious expert, is based on that. He may make his discoveries, but only because he has studied what was discovered before him; and if he is weary of the masterpieces, that is merely a disease of his trade, like phossy-jaw, which you should not wish to catch from him. A weary undergraduate once wrote a poem with the lines—

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> The simple pleasures of the old."

If you are old when first you visit Florence, let those pleasures be yours; let the guide-book be to you an open ally, not a shameful secret. Enter the Uffizi like a blest spirit passed by St. Peter; for there is no legend of any

such pretending to be a *habitué*; and if he did he would not impress the archangels.

"Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi."

That should be your motto, and, with Baedeker, the guide to your behaviour.

## OLD ROADS AND NEW

When the native returns to his childhood's home, he laments no change so much as the "improvement" in the roads. The old lanes well known to him and to his first pony, lanes which George Morland might have painted, are all gone. The banks and hedges have been shaved down; the trees have been felled. The cosy corners have been so rounded off that there is no more privacy; the curves have been so opened out that even at forty miles an hour they hold no surprises. And no more may hoofs or wheels make that pleasant sound, were it squelchy or gritty, which used to sing itself in his ears as he travelled. He must regret even the ruts, which never did he expect to regret in the days when they made the occasion of his first stern lessons in steady, straight driving. All that, within the little circle of ten or fifteen miles that he could cover, used to seem intimately his own is lost. The roads are anybody's and everybody's now. They are bare, open, shadeless and shameless, as shiny as steel and as hard as the rigour of commerce. They allow no loitering, no fancy. The old roads are gone for ever. Antiquaries may discover Roman roads in Sussex marshes or elsewhere; no one can ever restore the shady, winding, intimate lanes which—were they traced out by the "rolling English drunkard," by the pack-horse, or by the stream—always

seemed, in spite of Mr. Macadam and his ring, to have grown and not to have been made.

Those old roads were very pleasant and deserve regret. But the best of living in an age of transition (that is, of living in any age that ever was lived in) is that one may have one's cake and eat it. Those who knew the old roads knew something which their children never can know (always a satisfactory achievement), and may know them still in memory almost as clearly as they knew them in fact. They know, also, what their fathers could never know (another gratifying experience); and that is the new roads.

And, looked at in themselves—without a thought of what the new form of traction they were made for has done to increase knowledge and comfort and social amenities—the new roads are not fairly to be despised. They serve not only the pleasure of the tourist, the tripper, the stranger, but some convenience of those who now live in the places which they have pierced. And they have a quality, even a beauty, of their own. They have not the arrogance of a Roman road, which scorned the conquered country through which it passed and marched ruthlessly from Roman camp straight to Roman camp. They still follow the footsteps of the drunkard or the pack-horse, the windings of the stream, or the fancies of long dead landowners. But they follow in the manner of their day.

No one who keeps in touch with modern art can be unaware that this age is groping towards a new idea of beauty, which is so closely linked with efficiency that even Mr. Ruskin must be a little scared at the logical results of his teaching. And the new roads combine efficiency with other kinds of beauty to a degree forbidden to most modern products. In dull country, such, for instance, as that through which the Great Western Road takes its mighty way, they show nothing but their efficiency. But

through Devon woods and over Dorset downs these new roads seem to make their efficiency an element in their beauty. There is grandeur in their generous curves, their swinging loops, their bold undulations. They suggest power and purpose; and power and purpose have their charm, no less than the gentle, casual air of the old roads. And the steely surface, in sunshine or in rain, can take on lovely colours of many shades. It reflects trees and clouds almost like water. It lures, as the surface of a river lures, to embark upon it and see the world. To resist the lure, to blind the eyes to the beauty, to rebel against the power, is to miss one-half of the benefit of living in an age of transition. And to do that—in other matters than travel—is to be guilty of neglecting one's opportunities.

## ON SEEING ENGLAND

Most of us have been guilty at one time or another of a little scorn for sightseers. For good manners' sake, we have done our best to conceal it, and have passed on our way with polite solemnity after directing them on theirs; but, though our feeling may have been decorously hidden and, we hope, undetected, there it was undoubtedly in what they would call our insular hearts. Insular? This, at any rate, must not be charged against us on that score, for superiority towards sightseers is a weakness common to all the peoples of the earth. It is natural and inevitable. An Italian peasant, who sees us spending a couple of hours in a church which he passes every day of his life, smiles at us with the same air of "Poor fool! Poor fool!" with which we might regard a countryman of his who, guide-book in hand, made an elaborate examination of the Marble Arch. The peasant and we are, it may be, alike unreasonable. It is absurd to blame visitors from over-

seas who, while they are here, make what they can of the sights of London. Yet there is always lurking in the back of an Englishman's mind a feeling that, for all their energy, they are not making the best selective use of their time. They are missing what he believes to be the spirit of the country; they are in touch with ancient monuments, but not with contemporary manners; in visiting the show-places, they go precisely where no Englishman ever goes. Whatever they are seeing, it is not England that they see.

This criticism, like all criticism of the negative sort, is easy and satisfying to the critic's vanity. We and Parisians on their own boulevards and Italian peasants in the streets of their own hill-towns all indulge in it secretly at the expense of tourists. But sometimes, if we are honest, we put to ourselves a constructive question: What is the alternative to sight-seeing? If one of the group at which we have been smiling suddenly broke away from his fellows, closed his guide-book with a snap of defiance, and asked us for advice, how should we give it? He would raise his hat, touch us on the arm, and, amid our increasing embarrassment, begin: "Sir, I am bored with my guide; this volume is tedious; my companions, so thirsty for information, distress me exceedingly. Tell me what to do that I may get the authentic taste of English life—even if it be but a flavour. I want not merely to see England, but to be English for a little while."

A discerning tourist, we should think at once. We should congratulate and praise him—but how give him an answer? First, if we were true to our principles, we should rescue him from his hotel and, for want of a better English home into which to introduce him, take him to our own house in town or country. With that as his base, he should conduct his operations with as much liberty and as little assistance as possible. He should be made free of our

nursery, our garden, our friends, even our office; he should go to plays, as Englishmen go to plays, now and then, but not in series; he should go to the British Museum, as Englishmen do, if he had some definite quest there, but not otherwise; he should go to a village church on Sunday morning, and live somehow, in traditional quiescence, through an English Sunday afternoon; he should, in short, go his way through streets or lanes or meadows, and, abandoning the feverish search that so much distressed him, allow a little of customary England to drift easily into his mind. What! and go home without having "done" this and that and the other which every one will discuss so proudly in the returning liner? It is a question of taste. Should we ourselves prefer to see the Forum as it was, or to stay for a week in the villa of some contemporary of Cicero's? The modern tourist, if he has a hospitable friend, must make the same choice between the spectacular and the familiar.

## THE FAIR

To some it may seem all wrong that the raucous and gaudy creation which monopolizes so many otherwise peaceful corners of our summer countryside should be called a "fair." According to the general trend of things we ought to be lamenting the true fair's disusage—the passing of something joyously and completely representative of a country-life which should by rights have gone. To be in the fashion we ought to be saying that country fairs "are not what they were"; that "Merrie England" is no longer its old self; that serving-wenches no longer stand with their mops ready for the hiring, or smocked carters in a smiling row with their whips and ribbons; and that Autolycus might be hard put to it in these days

to make merchandise of that immortal fish's ballad "against the hard hearts of maids." Heyday, for the old simplicities!

And yet how very far from dead is the fair, even for buying and selling. What is this lowing of cattle and bleating of sheep which greets the ears of any sojourner in any self-respecting country town on the right day of the week? Who are these apple-cheeked country notables about the market-place? They have arrived by cars, possibly, in place of the old gigs; but they are still there for the fair. Looking through the almanac one finds that in England alone some five hundred country towns, whose names are five hundred sweet symphonies, continue to "proclaim" their regular days for the fair. It is astonishing, too, how many of them are particular about celebrating their favourite saint after this fashion, taking knowledge of his or her festival's date for granted. They hold unchanged, since the time of those mediæval charters, the faith of the fair. But more remarkable than all is the fact that from the point of view of amusement—and what else should "fair" mean but holiday?—the tale is one of growth rather than decline. These modern roundabouts, swing-boats, switchbacks, and bewildering machines for every sort of discomfiture—they have developed out of all comparison with the means of rural mirth available even to the passing generation in its uncritical youth.

Any idea, for instance, that the roundabout, as we know it, is a survival of the primitive would seem to need correction. Unless the "tournament"—a device of Charles II's day for the serious teaching of horsemanship—be accounted a forerunner, it must be within very little more than a century that a turning see-saw propelled by the feet took to itself an umbrella-top and a donkey, and became prototype to the common but splendid object of the present fair-ground. With a speed which beguiles memory the fair has advanced during recent years in

popularity as well as in the design of its appurtenances. It has been the making of fortunes. It has achieved representation in the House of Commons.

Those who resent this modern fair as a wild amalgam of tawdry colour and strident sound, horseplay and hazard, must remember that just the same characteristics have been deplored in the fairs of all ages. In spite of everything, a reassuring appetite for rough-and-tumble fun and a demand for bright colour and gay music by the rural population have always testified to the native vigour of our race. Though John Bunyan and Dr. Primrose might still find cause for regret, it is difficult not to feel that Mr. Justice Slender, in his careless days, with Will Squele, the "Cotswold man," or "Old Double," who could "clap i' the clout at four score," would have found plenty of good sport in a coconut-shy, and Christopher Sly and John Naps of Greece just as full pleasure as their successors in those physical shakes and jerks over which so much ingenuity has been expended of late. Even from the point of view of art there is much to be said for the fair, intentionally garish though it be. Its ingredients have been evolved by the country's needs. To look at a modern fair without a background is to believe it incapable of seeming anything else anywhere but a sin against every æsthetic canon. Yet, in its proper surroundings, flaunting itself upon the greensward beneath towering trees, the noise drowned in silent distances, it seems to fit into its place like some huge flower. So much primary colour can England's green landscape absorb!

From "oaten flute" to saxophone seems to be the measure of our advance upon the shepherds of vanished time. One has to go far nowadays in England to hear a shepherd's pipe. This cannot always be for lack of inspiration. Now, as ever, the young lambs bound in Easter's sunshine, "making all the vales rejoice." A shingled Phyllis may still meet her Corydon on our mountains or green plains, whilst old Damoetas caps saws in the bar-parlour or balances cloak against crook for the leisurely trudge to his cottage-home. Pastoral life is with us yet. Where are the pastoral songs?

There are two incidental masters of the pastoral mood who remind us tantalizingly of literature's debt to the actual craft of sheep-rearing. Though Shakespeare was to become a supreme dramatist, and Virgil an idolized epic poet, either of them would have won immortality by his pastoral verse alone—and both were children of the farm. No one can read the Third Georgic, with its catalogue of ovine maladies, without recognizing that Virgil's pastoral knowledge was deeper than any convention. The shepherds of the Eclogues are more than echoes of Theocritus. Their alleged Sicilian landscape has long been claimed to include the author's own paternal fields—and bee-hives—upon the banks of the Mincio. In the same way the reality of Shakespeare's pastoral youth—for it was a farmer's son from Snitterfield who married a Wilmcote farmer's daughter, to set up the little shop in Stratford-upon-Avon—is brought home to us at every turn. To compare Shakespeare's shepherds with Spenser's is to compare living truth with agreeable but conscious fantasy. Nor is

there any formal romance wasted over Shakespeare's shepherds. They speak—even the old shepherd in the *Winter's Tale*, who wished there were "no age between sixteen and three-and-twenty"—from Shakespeare's own heart.

It is hard to forbear questioning whether anything has ever quite taken the place of this racially pastoral spirit, which has, with us, so clearly ceased to inform any kind of popularly accepted verse. All the ribbons and pink hats of a dwindled Watteau tradition, all the faded dreams of *fêtes galantes* and Cytherean isles, will never recapture the note of the actual shepherd, in homage to whom they assumed their being. There is reason, perhaps, to doubt whether the association of poetry with sheep-rearing is itself direct or contingent. Though there must have been some vitally related cause, to find exactly where this lies is still something of a problem.

The present great pastoral regions of the world, for instance, are comparatively voiceless. Australian verse, though sometimes vigorous, has in general noticeably little of a classically pastoral quality. The secret cannot, accordingly, have lain with sheep as such. The main essentials to those joys which produced pastoral song seem to have been in the first place a blend of peace and ample leisure with a healthy, unexacting, open-air occupation, and a lack of other distractions. There must obviously be what is called in other circles "young society." The solitary stockman cannot well be asked to sing with jocund effect the praises of a permanently absent mistress. Still less can he be so when, for musical purposes, the gramophone is an all-too-efficient rival. A certain amount of prosperity seems also needed. Lack of this in the Aldborough of his early days may have explained a good deal of the scorn poured by Crabbe upon supposititious swains who

> ". . . their amorous pains reveal;
> "The only pains, alas, they never feel."

With all, simplicity of mind and dependence upon home-effort are irreplaceable. While selections from Albert Hall concerts and the latest *cabaret* dances from West-end hotels are conveyed instantaneously to the shepherd's cot, true pastoral poetry cannot be expected. Any call for rhyming contests beneath the hawthorn automatically ceases. The pastoral cannot be standardized. *Non omnes arbusta juvant.* It seems unlikely, too, that shepherdesses of the future will care much to take part in those traditional games, so many of which have long been transferred to the nursery. So the pastoral Muse may be held to have twitched her mantle blue for good. But in epic and drama stays enshrined for ever the love of nature taught by the happy songs of shepherds.

## PRIDE OF COUNTY

My county—right or wrong! We unite the better, after all, by cherishing our differences. This universal paradox has been thrown into a particularly clear light through the excellent efforts made by the English County Societies' Conference to combine a fostering of the spirit of county patriotism with that expressed in our national festivals. From some points of view there appears to be no urgent need for artificial emphasis. A certain spontaneous national institution, which carries its ethical influence to the farthest bounds of His Majesty's Dominions, and beyond them, has solved the problem on its own account for at least a lifetime of summers. A statement that without county cricket there would be no national cricket might be open to challenge. The evidence of football is difficult to gainsay. Yet how much of the glory would have departed if the place of Yorkshire and Lancashire, Kent, Nottingham, Surrey, and those other

counties to whose names great cricket has given imperishable lustre had been taken by a random array of clubs, with or without territorial qualification! One might believe almost as surely that the spirit of the old county regiments was of no value in the Great War as that pride of county will cease to have an ennobling influence on the national game so long as there is a stretch of green left in town or village of the old country, or a memory of it across the seas.

Other forms of sport, open-air and indoor, from golf and bowls and lawn tennis to billiards and chess, all carry on, with practically no need for any stimulus of propaganda, the tradition that each county is its neighbour's friendly foe. It remains a living tradition, though nowadays not necessarily based upon race or language. It snatches sometimes a value, which can never be fully defined, from what is officially known as "domicile," but might, without much fear of inaccuracy, be referred to as "home" for short. It is a spirit, however, whose essence really lies more in history, in the impulse from the past to the present and to the future, than in the actual mettle of any pasture. It is for some purposes enfranchised from all material association whatever.

The farther one goes into the matter the more apparent it is that in pride of county lies something beyond a preserving of obsolete and sometimes arbitrary divisions. The ideal involved has a very profound bearing upon the prospect now opening out before humanity at large. It is always to be remembered that, apart from the Mercian and some other "shires," strictly so called, many of our county boundaries represent the frontiers of kingdoms, duchies, and tribal domains over which actual warfare was waged for centuries with every extremity of bitterness. The Scottish border and the Welsh marches, Trent and Tees, Thames and Tamar, the forests which once

severed the West and South Saxons from each other and these last from the Men of Kent and Kentish Men, itself a nice distinction—how often have they been reddened with the blood of warriors, fighting for a parcel of land not "tomb enough and continent to hide the slain"! It does no harm to recall now and again that the very contrasts of language and of manners are reminders of barriers for which brave men gave their lives.

Thanks to apparently opposite, but in reality mutually helpful influences, the one unifying, the other differentiating, all those conflicting elements have been harmonized. The more each county remains itself, the more truly will the result be England. If this were not so, all the work that is being and has been done in the cultivation of county folk-lore and county tradition and county dialect would be in vain. It is a principle lying at the root of English government and of the unwritten laws of English sportsmanship, which might well be studied more largely than they are, and more seriously all the world over. For us, in any case, out of the courage and chivalry of ages has been born this sweet and gracious thing—pride of county. Though they need never be renewed, those long-past struggles and sacrifices—transferred now to an idealized and wholly joyous plane—were not wasted in the finer issue, any more than infinitely greater struggles and greater sacrifices may prove to have been in a future we cannot yet foresee. How otherwise should it be that the old ballad of Percy and Douglas, telling though it does of a petty and probably reprehensible foray, still has power to stir our souls "more than a trumpet"?

## THE AUTUMN FORESHORE

On any of the mornings of mid-August, the moment is liable to come when we are aware of a subtle change, in the atmosphere, in the sunlight, or in the appearance of vegetation; and we know that it is autumn. It is not perhaps autumn in the commonly accepted sense, but it is the first touch of autumn and a reminder that summer, which reigned securely enough even through the wet days of July, is on the wane.

Alone of the four seasons, the third, autumn, does not, strictly speaking, bear an English name. The "fall," which we hear in appropriate antithesis to the "spring" from the lips of American visitors, is not quite an equivalent. At any rate, it suggests a later period than August, while autumn, from its etymology, ought to imply not decline, but the full growth of the main crops—of corn, of wine in those countries where the vine flourishes, and of apples and their kindred. Not without significance is the German word for autumn "Herbst," which is, in essence, the same as our word for harvest. Practically, however, it has in it a like tinge of melancholy to that of our own acclimatized Latin derivative. The shorter northern season has affected it with the sense of final farewell to genial suns; whereas, to the Romans, as plenty of passages from Latin observers of nature testify, autumn was but a tempered version of summer, and the time, above all, for holidays, in view of the moderated heat and of the festivities associated with the grape harvest.

A charming dialogue of antiquity, and, incidentally, the earliest piece of Latin Christian apologetic, the *Octavius* of Minucius, is staged on the beach at Ostia during the

vintage holidays, when, as the reader is informed, there was a grateful *autumnitas* in the temperature. The Courts had lately risen. They rose, as we know, towards the end of August, for the benefit of wine-growers; and on the sands, where boys were playing ducks and drakes, two courteous disputants, a Christian and a pagan, threshed out their respective arguments in a grave forensic manner before an arbitrator. The conversion of Caecilius, the pagan, is complete; and the dialogue, with its pretty setting, has always been admired. It contains what is perhaps the oldest picture of a seaside holiday, and for that, if for no higher reason, deserves to be remembered.

The literature of the summer or autumn sands must be immense, even if we leave out the frivolous element; but it begins, if we take the *Octavius* as the beginning, with a piece of eloquence which, allowing for the differences of ancient and modern lines of controversy, must still command respect and the sympathy especially of lay readers. And it ends—where? We may at least let it go down to Mr. Doughty's poem, "Mansoul," and to the vision which one Minimus saw, as he paced the strand, of England, her Muse, her history, and her future. That poem was, if we are not mistaken, to a large extent an inspiration from the Sussex coast, and of a part of that coast, unless Mr. Doughty is about to correct us, as busy as Ostia and frequented as a popular resort. It is possible that a select few at the seaside, and driven to reading as a relief from the trials of a wet summer or early autumn, may be glad to know of foreshore books other than "best sellers."

## ROOTS AND BERRIES

Autumn is the season when earth ripens its wild harvests, and provides a slight but often not unpleasing supplement to the sandwiches of the holiday rambler. We have the authority of fairy stories for the statement that children lost in the wilds sustained themselves on roots and berries; but their example is not one to be followed. Roots in the modern English countryside usually mean turnips or mangel-wurzels, and though these are large enough to prevent actual famine, they are too rank when raw to recommend themselves as a staple of diet. They are also not fruits *ferœ naturœ*, the prey by right of vagrants as of beasts and birds, but a crop under proprietary control. The only wild root which it is in the least inviting to nibble after hard-boiled eggs and marmalade sandwiches is the pig-nut; and though Caliban made an obliging offer to dig them, even he, with his crude tastes, did not go so far as to say that they were nice. The real attraction of a pig-nut is the surprise that this spare, white-flowered weed under the beech-shadows should yield a tuber which is edible in the most liberal sense.

Mushrooms are of the true stuff of fairy stories, and although on our modest modern rambles we do not find little green men perched on them, who tell our fortunes and vanish suddenly, or even dogmatic caterpillars smoking hookahs, as in *Alice in Wonderland*, eaten raw, they make an aromatic savoury. They are improved to pampered modern tastes by a pinch of salt spared from the hard-boiled egg and a sprinkling of pepper. It is surprising that sloes and crab-apples can be so nasty, when they are the wild stock of plums and apples in our gardens.

Even Caliban did not venture to recommend these, and we shall leave them to the fallow deer and the hawfinches. Nuts are approved by ancient tradition, as well as by reformers in sandals, and we shall certainly add hazel-nuts to our hedgeside and forest luncheons, when we can find them ripe. Of fruits in the usual sense, far and away the most serviceable is the blackberry. It is large enough to be worth picking when we are lazy, which can seldom be said either of the wild strawberry or the whortleberry, and it allows itself to be gathered without stooping, which is indispensable in warm weather. Blackberries have many varieties, with different flavours to beguile a fickle or jaded palate; and all that we may fairly demand of Nature is that she shall evolve a kind which is attractive to ourselves, but not to wasps.

Haversack lunches are a little inclined to be insipid, or thirst-provoking if spicily flavoured; and the special virtue of a deep, cool bed of autumn watercress is that it sweetens our rations with the most refreshing of salads. Where there is watercress there is water, but not always as wholesome. Yet even among the rather narrow range of English springs, which are sometimes diluted with Epsom salts, but seldom with carbonic acid, there is a choice for the epicure between the mint-flavoured draughts of the lowlands, the peaty smack of some moorland torrent gleaming in the sunshine like aventurine, and the subtle distinctions between hard limestone waters and those from granite or sandstone.

## FIGS

Figs ripen rather fitfully in England; but for that very reason a fig-tree makes a particularly interesting, and even exciting, possession for its fortunate owner to watch, to tend, and perhaps to enjoy. Were the chances even

more adverse than they are against a harvest of fruit it would still be worth while trying to rear a fig-tree in some sunny and well-protected corner, just for the gambler's chance that in due season a perfect fig may come of it. And a perfect fig deserves all that can be said in its praise, and possibly a little more, for it can hardly be one of many, like a perfect apple or a perfect pear, nor will it keep long when once it has left the branch. As in mulberries, there is often much waste in figs; the promise of fruit, abundant to all appearance earlier in the year, may too easily disappoint; excess of heat or excess of cold during the more critical weeks of fructification will leave but so many hard bullets for the would-be fruit gatherer in autumn. Such a fig-tree there is in one of the oldest of London squares, where, try as it will, circumstances are perennially against it; not even the tutelary effigy of an illustrious and rather bacchanalian statesman can induce it to bring forth anything but ammunition for small boys. But here, clearly, it has to contend with unnatural conditions; a fig-tree that is to do anything must have shelter, and must receive also loving tendance, and possibly, too, a little petting, a little patting, a little pinching from one who is anthropomorphic enough in his gardening ideas to believe that such conduct towards growing fruit is actively encouraging.

Perhaps also particular figs, when they show unmistakable signs of becoming worthy, provided that the weather for the next few days is propitious, should be labelled: one for the master, and others for other members of the household. This plan has the advantage of turning a fig-tree into a genuine family affair; and there is something in the history of the fig-tree that seems to show that this is an appropriate and desirable course. Against the practice, it is true, can be cited the classical fate of Dr. Kennicott's fig, which became by invitation a

fig for Dr. Kennicott; and that, as William IV would say, is quite another thing, something in fact with a rather terrifying lore behind it, if the contemptuous fig for the Doctor may be held to be in line with the hot Italian gesture of the upraised hands, like Dante's thief's, *con ambedue le fiche.*

The southern races, as may occur to any moralizing patron of a fig-tree in England, have not been altogether kind to a fruit which has given them so much excellent sustenance. If Latin fig-lore is ferocious if Virgil, who had a good word for most trees, forgot the fig-tree altogether, and a contemporary of his spoke only of its useless wood; the Hebrew legend used the fig-tree to patch up some of the consequences of the forbidden fruit, and the Greeks drew from it the name of one of their most detestable characters, the informer and blackmailer, the sycophant or "fig-shower," who knew where to look in the concealing foliage for rare and refreshing fruit. But perhaps for these very reasons, rather than despite them, a fig-tree will be grown in the gardens of all who do not care to let climate cut them off from the stream of human tradition. Fig-leaves, the owner will remark, do screen the fruit fairly effectively, and when October has scattered them, yellow and flabby, over the lawn, their size shows up, whether they are to be accounted as large as "Amazonian targes" or not.

Whatever antiquity thought of figs, by the time they have taken root in this soil much of their old reputation has been shed. What the fig has most suffered from in the Mediterranean is very probably vulgarity; figs must have been to the old world perilously what bananas are to the present —jesters and buffoons among fruits of the earth, impossible to be taken altogether seriously. Perhaps if bananas could be occasionally persuaded to ripen against English walls, respect for them would increase, but even so they would

remain parvenus. For its associations quite as much as for the prospects of ripe and edible figs is the ownership of a fig-tree justified. Its fruiting, however, is actually common enough to make its whole progress through the summer the object of interested and tremulous regard; but rare enough all the same to call for a ceremonial picking and the observance of a scrupulous ritual before gustation.

## IN PRAISE OF APPLES

The apples are garnered, and our trees are bare of all but falling leaf. It may not have been a good year for apples; and yet the apple-room makes no bad show in exchange for the outdoor glories of autumn. In the worst cases the smell is there—the smell that, more than any other, links present pleasure with happy memories of childhood. And as we stand amid our shelves, fingering and sniffing at such apples as we may have, we shall do better to give up calculation of quantity or quality and fall to musing over apples in general and our own apple-trees in particular. It seems but a few weeks since on the bare boughs we hung the coconuts and the lumps of fat, and watched while we had our breakfast (for all wise folk have an apple-tree or two near the house) the birds having theirs: the tits, the chaffinches, the greedy and pugnacious robins. Then came the green buds and then the pink. And then, all of a sudden as it seemed, that May night (there is one such even in the unkindest year) when the apple-bloom gleamed, a mystery of loveliness, under the moon, and the nightingale was singing down by the stream. Poets made songs about it; lovers drew from it their tenderest images; and practical minds looked forward to the crop.

There is this about the apple, that more than any other fruit, more even than the cherry, it feeds our sense of

beauty and our sense of use as well. Are we in an old West Country orchard, where tradition forbids, for the fruit's sake, any trimming or tidying; are we in a stark new apple-farm, where whitewash and waist-belts and other foes of insect-nature do their best to push romance out of sight; are we among the graceful espaliers and the like devices of the pomologist, who knows every leaf on his trees and has a pet name for every apple; still this inextinguishably beautiful fruit—from its budding to its maturity in red, green, brown, or yellow globe—persists in charming the eye as well as the taste. And when it is picked, and eaten raw or cooked, the discerning palate knows well that no fruit can lend itself to so many different uses, and no fruit—not even the pear, "with which one has sat up all night"—can beat it for flavour at its best. The very touch of it, rough or smooth, is an invitation. In the taste there is a cleanness like that of fresh air, a subtlety like that of Mozart at his purest.

Yet of the apple we make little more fuss than of the potato. We even permit our menu-writers to call the potato by its name without the qualification of earthiness. We take the apple for granted, except perhaps on that one May night, or on a bright morning in September, or during our first contemplation of the newly filled apple-room. And, suddenly becoming sensitive to its manifold appeal, we may be led on to wonder whether we do not lose very much of the value of life by thus taking for granted other things besides apples: simple things, things that are common in our lives, but have for those alert to savour it a positive worth. The idleness of use and wont is one cause of our dullness; and another is the anxiety which distracts our minds from the present moment to problems of the future, not yet ripe for consideration. We may suspect also, in Englishmen and in Englishwomen also, some degree of shyness about realising their own emotions

and tastes; we are not yet far enough from "the æsthetic movement" to feel quite safe in admitting even to ourselves that this or that very simple thing is beautiful and good. That is why the apple is the very subject with which to begin the attempt to enjoy all the easy and natural pleasures enriching the trivial round. The apple is not exotic, nor "æsthetic"; it is a good, homely fruit, dear to the schoolboy, a fit simile for a baby's cheeks or the face of an old peasant, yet, in its passage from bud to ripeness, capable of choicely pleasing all the senses.

## AUTUMN BONFIRES

Whatever may be the case with other votaries of Guy Fawkes Day, it must be admitted that gardeners as a race have a very poor notion of making a bonfire. They set it going with as little as possible of paper and sticks; then they heap upon it as much as possible of the stuff which they want to destroy, and let it take as long as it pleases about burning dully away. Men who live in a gloomy state of disappointment, because mischievous Nature is always playing tricks on them, cannot be expected to snatch at the chance of a game; and in being wholly serious about the autumn bonfire they miss one of the best garden games of the season. It is a very cheap game. It can be played, after a fashion, with any garden refuse; but it reaches St. Andrews form only in gardens which include a wild part where bracken and gorse can be allowed all summer to prepare themselves for the autumn sacrifice. They must be destroyed; but let them be destroyed with honour. Let the bracken grow to its full height and turn brown and gold and red. Then it shall not be left to droop and decay; it shall be cut down and lie in the air until, if luck holds and the weather is fine, it has com-

pletely dried. And on the perfect morning—a sunny autumn morning, with a light breeze blowing away from house and outbuildings—it shall be burned with ceremony.

Unlike the merely practical gardener, the artist in bonfires begins with all the old newspapers and seed-merchants' catalogues that he can lay hands on; a small can of paraffin, large heaps of dead sticks cut fresh from firs or other trees, and—this is a strict rule of the game—only one match. All this "bottom" is necessary because the incendiary's purpose is not merely to destroy rubbish. It is to reach back into his own childhood and the childhood of his genius; it is to play with fire. Once his bonfire is well started, he has a toy that he may play with, should he manage it properly, almost as long as he wants to. Now he may send flames roaring high; now (in common phrase) volumes of smoke as dense as the publishers' autumn lists, and certainly no less rich in variety and beauty. Now he may damp it all down to a sullen smoulder, and, having left it for the night, find it next morning burned through the middle into the form of a huge bird's nest, but still alight and ready to be pronged and persuaded and fed into new activity.

Rubbish must be burned. Even the gardener admits that; and he admits that the gorse and the bracken and all the inflammable matter of the "bottom" hasten and facilitate the burning of his special contribution. A bonfire is more than play; it is play that serves a useful purpose; and nothing in the world can make a man so happy as play that is also useful. Yet, should his sense of duty continue to prick him a little, there are certain obvious reflections over which he may moralize to himself as he heaps on more fuel, or redresses the balance of the heap, or wakes up a sluggish strip with his long-handled fork. Playing with a bonfire comes to seem very like managing his own soul. In both there is rubbish to be

burned by fire. Like human nature, a bonfire is deceptive and tricky. All seems to be going well, when suddenly the cleansing fire falls and the weight of dead stuff chokes it. Nothing seems to be happening, and "the dark night of the soul" begins to possess him, when without warning the flame leaps through, and one more obstinate lump of refuse is destroyed. There are times of confident quiet when little smoke or fuss is to be seen, yet the faint cracklings from the heart of the mass prove that the good work is going steadily on.

The false end is as common in bonfires as in conduct. It looks as if all had been consumed. A turn of the prong in the black remainder reveals a solid, caked mass that must be broken up all over again before the fire can prevail against it. So, as most men know to their cost, it is with the selfishness, the greed, the fear that are the refuse of the human soul, the dead stuff which the fire of virtue, or of good sense, or of love, or whatever it may be called, must consume if the ground is to be clean and the fruit and flowers are to grow.

And one more reflection may occur to the player of the game as he puts his fork back in the tool-house and goes in to have a bath. This fire, which has seemed only to destroy, has also created. See the only half-concealed delight with which the gardener will take that heap of ashes to dig into his beds. In the destruction of rubbish new power has been made; the negative has been changed into the positive. Every man's experience can point to periods in his own life when dust and ashes proved to be sources of new growth.

# WINTER WALKS

For the epicure in country walks the most attractive season begins when crisp winds and the earlier fall of night call most ramblers back to the fireside. Over all those who enjoy the sheer physical glow of a good walk autumn exercises a reinvigorating power. The languor which afflicted us in July is over; at the touch of October coolness in the air, and the changeful animation of the woods and hedges which in late summer became so monotonous, a vigour replenishes us like the strength of youth revived, and a new zest nerves us to new enterprises. There is delight in stepping out past the milestones, and in ignoring with an animating self-commendation, the bowers and halting-places which had often a fatal attraction in hot summer sunshine. For townsmen who seek recreation in country walks there should be no reproach, moreover, in welcoming the retreat from byways and footpaths of the summer throng. When man or maid has spent the week in a crowded town, where pleasure as well as work is usually gregarious, it is no misanthropy when the attraction of a walk in the country is increased by the probability of solitude. The world still lies open to the crowds of summer, but they no longer come; winter walkers have the pleasure of privacy without the self-reproach of exclusiveness. But for some annual abatement in the throngs disgorged from Easter to Michaelmas out of London and other great towns, their chief places of resort could hardly preserve their rural attraction.

Autumn and winter walkers watch nature in gradual self-repair. As the trees grow bare, the worn turf mends the holes in its green mantle, and the fret of the south-west wind and rain gradually dissolves the cigarette boxes

and chocolate wrappers which the crowd has left as sordid mementoes. Now, too, though many birds have flown to the south and sleepy beasts have gone into winter hiding, there is ample liberty for the study of those which remain, or now first join us. The denizens of frequented paths and thickets learn the appointed seasons of human migration almost as accurately as the naturalist can foretell the coming and going of the birds of passage. For the blackbird, and even the wary jay, autumn brings the signal to feed again at broad noonday on the August trippers' picnic-ground with the freedom which all birds show at dawn, before the world grows busy. Rabbits dabble the dew on the grass between the ribbed motor-ruts, and the jackdaw searches for well-matured tit-bits among the sandwich-papers. The mistier the day, the greater the confidence of most winged and four-footed creatures. Birds are driven earthwards, and they and beasts alike seem half reassured and half deceived by the enclosing veil.

When the time comes to eat a pocket luncheon, the experienced winter walker knows well how to find a dry lair on any but the wettest days. Heather is usually dry on the commons, and beds of beech-leaves in the woods; failing these, a comfortable hammock is found by sinking with discreet firmness into a wild white rose bush, the small and pliant thorns of which are harmless either to or through any clothes fit for winter walking. There is an attraction at least as great as that of summer verdure in the flaming foliage of October, and even more, perhaps, in the glow of the russet oak-leaves, which fade so slowly in the mild English climate from the smouldering tree-tops in November and December. The day which in towns seems submerged in fog and gloom is in the country full of clean and sober refreshment; and the walker is cheered home at nightfall by limpid planets and twinkling stars, or by still darkness unknown in cities.

# DARK MORNINGS

When winter mornings are at their darkest even those who are usually late risers have to get up by artificial light. If they are wise they will not grumble, as at a hardship, but rather rejoice that by an accident of latitude they are obliged for the time being to share in what is the common lot. For getting up in the dark in winter is the lot of practically all mankind, and those who manage to escape it all the year round—unless, indeed, they are journalists, who reverse the normal processes of life—must be either exceptionally luxurious or exceptionally primitive.

Nevertheless, for the more comfortably placed it is only a short annual experience, though to the right-minded among them an enjoyable one. Its pleasures are those of the universal, and nothing is more universal than certain natural processes, like the gradual supersession of lamp and candle power by the increasing daylight. Twilight, though at the other end of the day, was hailed by Wordsworth in lines which celebrated its universal qualities; and the particular, if modern humanity did but know it, is often less satisfactory and less conducive to peace of mind than the universal. It is well, therefore, that everybody, except regular night-workers and "sleepless lovers" who "at twelve awake," should be overtaken at least during the winter solstice with so peremptory a universal of nature as an awakening in the dark. Civilization makes artificial distinctions between the times of rising for different classes; highly organized communities do not, like the less highly organized ones, awake instantaneously at sunrise; but by a piece of perversity, as it

would seem, there is a constant struggle in them to attain to the status of the latest risers. While these gain in certain ways, they lose in others through their often all too successful evasion of a general obligation.

It may be that the very commonness of early rising has robbed it of much of the praise which is usually bestowed upon virtue. The ideal housewife of the Jewish scriptures, the virtuous woman with many domestic cares, rose, it is true, betimes, and roused her handmaidens betimes also; but literature as a whole appears to have less commendation for the early risers than for the late sitters for virtue's sake. Virgil, if he really wrote a certain pretty description of peasant life, which is attributed to him and was translated by Cowper, dwells more on the inconveniences of his rustic subject's matutinal circumstances than on the excellence of his self-discipline; and, as a whole, poetry is readier to admire those who burn lights late and outwatch the Bear than those who begin their thrifty ways before dawn.

Bulwer Lytton speaks somewhere of one whose lamp was never "quenched" in its "casement" before midnight, thereby showing that he wished his readers to be impressed; but the same words would hardly be used of a man who simply got up early, turned on the electric light and the gas-fire, and read and wrote till breakfast time. Yet this, thanks to science, is what anybody can do now in complete comfort. These handy appliances dilute the old heroism of getting up in the dark and cold and foraging about for light and warmth; but, if so, they equally cut the ground under the traditional merits of studious nights and midnight oil. Indeed, there can be no excuse for all-night sittings now. The early mornings are as quiet for study as the nights; and they can be aired, to use Thackeray's expression, in a trice. Poetry, however, may take some time yet to adjust itself to the new

conditions; it may continue to prefer day to be day and night to be night, believing in these two great universals, and not wishing, even on a dark winter morning, to see them lose their identities.

## POP, BANG!

When Elvira, having let down all her back hair at that pleasant evening party, dispatched her Ferdinando to find out who it was that wrote those lovely cracker mottoes, she showed but a meagre curiosity. Who made the crackers which contained the mottoes? Who invented the pop-bang itself? What brain toiled in the watches of the night till it had mastered the secret of red and green and blue and gold transparent paper, which, torn from the disjointed members of the extinct monster and held before excited eyes, outdoes the glass of York herself and dyes the world in heraldic glories? (But something whispers that that transparent paper is no more seen on crackers. Is the secret lost, like that of the Cremona varnish—or was it only made in Germany?) And who, painting the lily and gilding refined gold, added the last, exquisite, supererogatory touch of the little picture—Father Christmas, a baby, a bunch of flowers, a funny face—stuck on the outside?

Indeed, Elvira, the romantic Victorian heroine of a Bab ballad, was anxious only about the very part of the cracker in which most people take no interest. Our parents used to say that the mottoes were "vulgar"; our children spurn the mottoes (and the riddles, too) as "feeble," and plunge at the caps, the masks, the whistles, the what not, which are the reward of courage and good luck. Let us insist upon the courage. In these sybaritic days there are, we understand, crackers with no pop-bangs in

them, and elders who spoil the child (and the fun) by taking out the pop-bang before the cracker is pulled. To do so is to endanger the stamina of a nation. True, every party will contain one or two little ladies who are, or pretend to be, gun-shy. The worst cases shut their eyes and stop their ears with both hands—an attitude in which it is impossible to pull a cracker. The more mildly afflicted turn their heads away and pull as if the one thing they desired in life was that the cracker should not go off. Here is the chance for the small cavalier at the other end of it. Now it is that he will reveal himself. If he is a very perfect gentle knight, he will coax the lady into courage; if, on the other hand, he is a hundred-per-cent. he-man, he will either browbeat her into hardihood or punish her by bestowing cracker, cap, and his favour on one of her rivals.

Some slight test of character there may be in the workings of that mysterious decree of Fate by which some people always get the body and contents of the cracker and some people always the mean and useless tail. But the pop-bang is the searcher of hearts and the maker of manners. It may not go off at all. If it does not, are we disappointed or relieved? If it does, are we triumphant or frightened? If a tiny spark should light on our thumb, are we proud or insulted? Perhaps it is not without significance that the cracker, being in its little way a firework, may claim to have its origin among the Chinese, a people unmatched for endurance of pain and concealment of mental agitation.

And now the crackers are all pulled, and the table is littered with bright paper; and a great-uncle has done grumbling that crackers are not what they were because they never now contain those squidgy indiarubber faces which would stick on to anything if you licked the back (it is those wretched motor-cars, of course, which use up all the rubber—but he is glad he bought those shares when he did); and Mummy has looked up the long table, half-

wondering how on earth she came to marry that extraordinary object in a tall yellow fool's cap, and half-blessing him for the youngest of all his children; and Daddy, looking down the long table, has caught a glimpse of what a dear old lady she will make when she has taken to lace caps with rosebuds on them, instead of that ridiculous but somehow very attractive paper bonnet. And all round the table flushed faces are surmounted by insecure, tickly, ill-fitting hats, caps, helmets, crowns, bonnets, frills; and every one (not only the youngest) is obscurely happy in having played with fire and come safely through, and rather less obscurely happy in being dressed up. Even small boys can be comfortable in their best suits and clean collars if they have something flimsy and fantastic on their heads to take the stiffness off. Five minutes later the tickliness has become unendurable; and the caps join the other litter on the table because there are other games to play. But the crackers have served their turn. True, they are sometimes used as finger-napkins or clothes-brushes; but this is no part of their proper function. They have served their turn and are forgotten—unless, indeed, some one has the luck to find a pop-bang, which has lost its cracker, and with heroic hands pulls it in a last salute.

## BIRDS ON THE STALL

Poulterers' shops in winter possess an attraction independent of the allurements of the table. Even after grouse and partridge and pheasant have gone out of season, these unglazed and amicably accessible fronts continue to exhibit in scarcely less opulence the variety of creation. Wild ducks do not wait for spring to put on nuptial dress; and, although their feathers are apt to become a little

draggled by the time that they are exposed for sale, the bright markings of the drake mallard and teal and widgeon provide contrasts which are thoroughly pleasing with each other and with the sober livery of their mates. It is true that all these ducks chiefly haunt fresh water, and can be seen alive among the cosmopolitan assemblage of water-birds in St. James's and other parks. But even the half-tame competitors for the Londoner's dole of bread-crumbs retain a mobility which often defeats the inquiring eye, and points of plumage which are a little uncertain when teal or widgeon are scrambling in the water can be verified in serene convenience when the birds are hanging motionless upon a rail.

Besides certain ducks of discriminating diet, members of two other important families of wild birds make a legitimate contribution to civilized tables. A poulterer's shop well exhibits the sharp contrasts of anatomy between true water-birds and waders. As the ducks' feet are obviously webbed for free swimming, and their broad bills for sifting and squeezing a soft diet, so the long legs and bills of the snipe and woodcock are as evidently adapted for wading and probing in the mire. As the brown snipe dangles inanimate before us, at the end of its beak we can detect traces of a withered corrugation which represents the sensitive nerve-surface by which the feeding bird was able to recognize the unseen worm. Earth-worms may not appear to us a very delicate diet, but they are converted by the digestive processes of many birds into sweet and generous flesh. It is the fishy smack of a seaside diet which banishes some waders, as well as many ducks, from the tables of epicures; and by this time of year, when curlews have for some time been feeding by the sea, they are repudiated by discriminating purchasers, though they are now and then displayed, for show, in the shops. Even a curlew from the seashore is said to be palatable if

skinned before cooking; but few cooks are sufficiently adaptable to defy precedent.

Since Russia has declined towards barbarism, our shops in later winter are less abundantly stocked with exotic specimens of the scratchers or game-bird tribe. But we still fairly often meet with specimens from other sources of the capercailzie, which suggests a wild turkey with the beak of a bird of prey, with foreign black-game emerged from cold storage, with the purely alien hazel-hen, and with willow-grouse in white winter plumage, which are larger than true ptarmigan. No valid objection can be raised to the use for food of any of these birds; but now and then the poulterers' shops offer a spectacle less creditable to their customers' good sense and good feeling. Golden plovers may fairly pay toll to the table, for the species is abundant, and it feeds chiefly on uncultivated land. But with the common green plover, peewit, or lapwing the case is different. Even if, as is sometimes alleged, many of the lapwings sold here in winter come from abroad, they are birds of the same stock which migrate hither to rid English fields in winter of insect pests, and, in any event, it is hardly a friendly act to eat the farmers' friends of our Continental neighbours. And so long as strings of skylarks continue to find sellers and buyers in England, English bird-lovers are in an exceedingly unsatisfactory position when they try to discourage the use of other song-birds for food in certain foreign countries.

## ON WRAPPING UP

Winter can be a "fine time for them as is well wropped up"; yet it is probable that few people really put on enough clothes to keep themselves warm. A hatred of great-coats is deeply rooted in human nature. It is one

of the most passionate yearnings of very small boyhood to go out without a coat on. The boy will protest that he is "boiling" in the hopes of escaping the indignity. The sight of an emancipated contemporary makes him hotter with shame than any coat could do. When he grows up he becomes only a little wiser, and the very best of husbands and fathers writhe with irritation if begged to wrap up warmly: indeed, in the case of those who are at all perverse, this request is the surest way of sending them to their death. Mittens can impart a glow to the whole frame, but how few will condescend to wear them.

There are, of course, some practical objections to overmany clothes. The man who sets out on a walk to his office swathed, mittened, and blanketed may arrive mopping his brow; to begin by being warm enough in bed under a surfeit of eiderdowns is to wake up with a nightmare. It may be a wiser policy to start on the enterprise, whether of walking or sleeping, with gently chattering teeth. But this is not the reason why men do not wrap up. It is because they feel it a slur on their manhood. A nose that the wind has tweaked is regarded as the red badge of courage. Even those of us who do put on enough clothes cannot wholly despise this belief. When the polar bear, as he skated, uttered his famous soliloquy, he mocked quite genuinely and without the prick of conscience at those who were not "wropped up" in such nice thick coats as his. We are not such natural animals; our emotions are more complex; and, though we may call our uncoated neighbour a fool, we admit with a touch of envy that he is a gallant fool.

Those who have never gone out without enough waistcoats have probably never forgotten an engagement nor missed a train, and of this, too, they feel in their secret souls just a little ashamed. To miss a train induces many

violent emotions, but shame is not one of them. That which does bring shame, unless our manlier selves are quite dead, is to arrive so early that the ticket office is shut and the carriages are being dusted. Then, indeed, we feel like an elderly, agitated maiden lady. We may fuss our way through life safely, even serenely, but scarce proudly. The only noble gesture attainable with a clinical thermometer is that of throwing it out of the window. And it is just as well that this should be so, for a people that debated as to the number of its woolly waistcoats before plunging into battle would soon be swept off the earth by some more reckless race. We cannot all go out duck-shooting in our nightgowns, but there must be something lacking in us if we can find nothing to admire in Jack Mytton. Too many Myttons would make the world intolerable, but just one such splendid Gascon every fifty years or so would be an inspiration. And now and then, as we tuck in our scarves and turn up our collars, it may be worth while to reflect that he would have said to us, as he did to his nervous friend in the gig, "What a damned slow fellow you must have been all your life."

## HOT BOTTLES

"I wish him joy," says the song, "wherever he dwell, who first found out the Leather Bottèl." There is no disputing the title of this anonymous hero, who enabled so great an advance in the technique of drinking, to the reverent gratitude of posterity. Yet thanks as ardent are surely due to the inventor, not less obscure and assuredly not less beneficent, of the hot-water bottle; nor will they be withheld as winter approaches by any but those jaundiced stoics who decline its solace. Many take to this bottle which "cheers but not inebriates," than which

there never was a purveyor of comfort more unpretentious, more inexpensive, more innocently seductive.

In its absence (due, it may be, to principle, but more probably to accident) who has not stood before his bed like a diver by an icy flood into which he must perforce plunge, eyeing the frosty sheets with shrinking and repugnance? And how willingly by contrast, nay, how eagerly that plunge is made by one who descries under the coverlet the faint but fateful convexity which denotes its presence! For he knows that beneath the forbidding surface lies ambushed a genial midnight sun, lightless, indeed, but insinuatingly calorific—a mobile reserve of bottled firelight, which can be shifted from point to point, driving before it from pillar to post the demons of chill until they can find no lodgment anywhere. Nor is it these demons alone who yield to the mounting flood of physical well-being, but all their allies and hangers-on. Half the crabbed humours, the biting discontents, and the atrabilious fancies of mankind follow where once cold has forced an entrance, and vanish with its eviction.

The proportion of human acts or omissions which are determined by the state of the agent's circulation is not fully appreciated. The surface temperature of the body (for the inward warmth would seem to vary little, except when we "have a temperature") is a most powerful determinant of human conduct. The calorific has at least equal claims to acceptance with the economic interpretation of history. Men with chronically warm hands and feet do not commit suicide. The "four o'clock in the morning courage," which is so rare and so enviable, comes easily to them. Their thoughts are not distracted by the pinch of chill from the business which they have in hand. Their affections are not estranged from their friends by that preoccupation with self which physical malaise, however caused, inevitably engenders. Such are the blessings of a good

natural circulation. If we possess it not, where are we to turn for a substitute?

There is, of course, wine, which will procure all these blessings for a time and at a price. But, as Bentham insists, pleasures must be weighed by reference not only to their intensity but to their duration. The mercury in the hedonometer may rise far above normal as the result of wine; but it will not maintain itself there. After too short an interval follows the inevitable compensating sag. This is the more intelligible if, as some scientists assert, alcohol actually lowers the average temperature of the body, creating its effect of peripheral warmth merely by diverting the blood from centre to the surface. However this may be, the effects of the hot bottle—less intense, and it must be owned less stimulating to the imagination—are far more enduring. Nor have its worst enemies suggested that it produces any morbid physical aftermath.

Its glories are unsung. It has been celebrated by no sacred bard. It has barely insinuated its way into a modern realistic novel. The warming-pan has enjoyed far more literary publicity, as readers of *Pickwick* are unlikely to forget. Yet the warming-pan is a clumsy instrument. Before the sleeper enters the bed it must be extruded, leaving behind, not the abiding substance of warmth, but its fading echo. Even the primitive cylinders (still encountered now and then) of stone or metal are to be preferred to it. They at least pernoctate with us, continue their angular ministrations till the small hours, and seldom if ever leak. But when all has been said (and there is something to be said against him on the score of leaking) what can compare with the plain rectangle of rubber, jacketed as a rule in post-office red, securely stoppered and not too full?

## WASTE-PAPER BASKETS

To the reflective mind it is curious that the waste-paper basket, which in the ever-increasing flood of printed, type-written, and written matter, symbol of the growing complexity of modern civilization, has become an article of prime necessity, is not held in greater honour and reverence. It is sometimes even kicked by the impatient and irascible from one end of the room to the other, and it must be admitted that in this way relief may on occasion be obtained for pent-up emotion, but at the expense of justice. In a book published not long ago there appeared a picture entitled "The Author and his Best Friend," the friend being a remarkably capacious waste-paper basket. The picture would have delighted Flaubert, and indeed every author who is convinced of the necessity of publishing very much less than he writes.

But, though to most authors the waste-paper basket or its equivalent is indispensable, it is hardly less of a necessity to every one, men and women alike. There is even a peculiar pleasure in the irrevocable disposal by this means of superfluous matter. The sense of finality which the well-ordered mind enjoys in dropping into it the fragments of an answered letter, the less orderly mind no doubt enjoys too, at any rate, for a period, in contibuting an unpaid bill. Great is the virtue of the waste-paper basket well filled day by day, only to appear swept and garnished on each succeeding morning. It is a type of the process by which man lives, the thorough and punctual elimination of waste products. The story of failure to use it for that purpose is told copiously and confusedly by littered desks, choked pigeon-holes, and the painful sortings,

tearings, and burnings which embitter any change of quarters.

The well-regulated man therefore insists upon his waste-paper basket and sees to it that it does not go empty away. It is to him a prime instrument of that faculty of selective and purposeful oblivion without which he would succumb to the multiplicity of his environment. There may be mere forgetfulness without its aid, but sooner or later mere forgetfulness rises up in judgment. Even the unemptied waste-paper basket knows doubts and second thoughts; the hurried scrabbling among the litter to retrieve some regretted scrap of paper, the hopeless jig-saw striving to piece together some document only too well and truly torn. But with the periodical clearance of the basket even that poor room for repentance is denied to us, and the darkness of final doom descends upon its contents.

It is hardly over-fanciful to carry the thought beyond mere stationery and wickerwork. Important as it is to get rid of circulars and correspondence, it is even more to a man that he should keep himself free and unencumbered in the sphere of faith and conduct. There are things which he must scrap day by day unless he is to find his powers of will and deed clogged and hampered. Cherished opinions must be brought to the touchstone of widened knowledge and new experience. Prejudices and assumptions lightly conceived must be torn in pieces if an honest scrutiny discovers in them nothing of lasting truth and worth. Fears must be faced and made to reveal whether they are built upon the sand. Perhaps this is why the abandoned policies of political parties are said to have been consigned to the waste-paper basket, the dimensions of which must be extremely large. At times we may, like Lætitia Dale in *The Egoist*, have to give a wrench to the neck of the young hope in our breasts and dispose of the corpse as

best we can. It is a stern discipline, but it has its reward. "Tho' much is taken, much abides." And that which abides is all the more precious for the loss of that which has been taken. Rejection is the counterpart and the condition of retaining that which is worth the keeping.

## WINDOW-BOXES

First, lest we become so enslaved by their charms that we cannot see their dangers, let us recognize in them a possible impediment to romance. "She rose, and put on the fairest gown she had; she took the bedclothes and other pieces of stuff, and knotted them together like a cord, as far as they would go. Then she tied the end to a pillar of the window, and let herself slip down quite softly into the garden." Thus Nicolette went to Aucassin through the streets of Beaucaire. A window-box would so have interfered with such adventure that Boccaccio's misused husbands surprise us by having failed to hit upon so protective an invention. How the cracking of wood and the shower of earth would have wakened the duennas and set the watch-dogs howling a *réveillé* to the deceived! If there had been window-boxes, no lady would have let down her hair that a lover might climb to her kisses; there would have been no gateway to enchantment save the crude front door. The virtue of necessity would have swept like a wave over Europe. Florence itself might have been a dull place. Denied the window, morals would have taken a different course; given the embellished sill, architecture would have had a different history. If there had been window-boxes there might have been no Renaissance.

Yet their hostility to naughtiness should, perhaps, increase our respect for their virtue. Not everywhere is

there opportunity for escapades of the kind with which they interfere. They are an adornment of towns where, if you climbed through windows, an unsleeping police would mistake love for larceny; of university colleges whose romance is in their stones; of public institutions which no wise gallant is at pains to enter.

Window-boxes come not singly. One flash of nasturtium lights a trail; now the street and now the neighbourhood is ablaze; critical heads are poked from windows; even the caged linnet sings praise of his master's handiwork and defiance to his rivals. Gray knew them. From Pembroke College, Cambridge, he wrote, in answer to a friend's praise of gardens: "Why, I have no such thing, you monster; nor ever shall be either dirty or amused as long as I live! My gardens are in a window like those of a lodger up three pairs of stairs in Petticoat Lane or Camomile Street, and they go to bed regularly under the same roof as I do." And fifty years ago, whoever walked, some early morning of summer, from Liverpool Street towards Paddington by way of Holborn and Cheapside, was saluted by such a blaze of flowers and such a chirruping of singing-birds that London seemed to have planned a welcome for him.

Ruskin himself approved window-boxes with cautious solemnity. "With very little help from the carpenter," a girl without a garden "can arrange a safe box," but she must be sure, for health's sake, that all her "plant-pets are kept well outside of the window." That may be taken as a counter to Johnson, who would have hated window-boxes, not because they were an obstruction to agility, but because he liked best the garden "which produced most roots and fruits," and laughed at Shenstone, who thought otherwise. But even Johnson admitted that "some praise must be allowed by the most scrupulous observer to him who does best what multitudes are con-

tending to do well." Indeed, all reputable authority must be on the side of window-boxes, from Linnæus to the linnet; only such rogues as Cellini might offer objection; and whoever cultivates or encourages them does good service. There is little need of the Ruskinian carpenter; a sugar-box will do, and a few trowelfuls of the world. But remember the outlandish proverb:—"Although it rain, throw not away thy watering-pot." Remember, too, that thou mayst pour worse things than scorn upon thy neighbour's head.

## THE FLIGHT OF TIME

Travellers, whose eyes, undimmed by habit, are able to remark more clearly than our own the changes which year by year creep gradually over England, have lately noticed a falling off in our clocks. They declare that, as things of fashion, clocks are visibly declining, and that they are now held in less honour than they were during the last century. Clocks privately owned, but set up with no particular reason for every one to see, have indeed become fewer. It was once an almost necessary mark of the respectability of any important trading-house that, somewhere on its outer walls, the time should be told to the world. In a sense it was a form of dignified advertisement. It was hoped that you would learn to set your watch as you passed the ever-accurate timepiece of Messrs. Solid, Rich, and Solid, and that you would at last be persuaded, by an association of ideas, to believe in the unfailing reliability of the goods they offered. But, be it said to the honour of that famous firm, there was more pride than profit in their clock, and well they knew it. Lesser houses imitated them when they could afford it. The Victorian shop-keeper who developed into a Victorian

merchant hung a complacent clock over his business premises at the same time, and for the same reason, that he introduced sherry-wine into his parlour and a barouche to his wife's front door.

Many of these badges of commercial prosperity remain, but they are vanishing survivals. They stare down on the scurrying stream of clerks and typists in the luncheon hour with just that air of bland disapproval with which old Mr. Solid, who rose with the Crimea, would gaze upon them, if he could stand now at his office window, stroking his gold albert and fingering the first family seal. But he is there no more, having gone long ago to rule his dynasty in the first family vault. The newcomers who flood the senior partner's room look out with indifferent eyes upon his clock. They cannot see it as the symbol that once it was. They remember the cost of its upkeep, they discover that it is not necessary, and they mark it down for retrenchment.

Elsewhere the same horological tragedy is being played. When Mrs. Rich came a-calling on Mrs. Solid she took her tea amid an orchestra of boomers and tinklers. Grandfather laboured in the hall; great-grandfather wheezed and rattled on the half-landing. Through the open dining-room door came a glint of mahogany, a gleam of decanters and biscuit barrels, and the stroke of a magnificent marble timepiece (with inscription). The drawing-room was full of tinklers—one that accorded with the Continental elegance of the gilded mirror on the mantelpiece; another glass-cased on an occasional table, which balanced a stuffed parakeet, whose perch was upon the opposite wall and perhaps a third, irregular, wilful, and defiant of grandfather, which yet looked archly decorative on a fringed bracket. All, all are gone with Mr. Solid himself, who wound them and his conscience every Sunday morning. Now something efficient tells the time somewhere. You

may look at it if you like. For her own part, the newest Miss Solid, whose very name is become an anachronism, relies dangerously on her wrist-watch.

So it is farewell to the superlative days of clocks. We need waste no more grief upon the tinkler than upon the parakeet; but it is strange to reflect that, as clocks go out of fashion, so time also appears to fall from grace. Who now draws a moral from a clock's ticking? Who now sits, as our grandmothers sat, consciously listening to the flight of time, and dreaming, however simply, of things not temporal? The age of meditation has given place to an age of speed, of speed so compelling and so obvious that the little, warning mottoes of clock and sundial, which have been a lash to all other generations, mean nothing to ours. Time flies—so fast that we have not time to consider its flight. We call it a platitude because we dare not face its truth.

## THE NEW DIARY

Whoever starts a new diary does it, if he is a wise man, in secret, for, if it be known to his friends that he keeps a punctual record of his own doings and theirs, they will treat him with a reticence that may embarrass him. "But," the diarist will say, "who need have fear of me? I have not an ear at the political keyholes. I do not enjoy what Pepys called 'very high company.' No secrets of State, you may be sure, will find their way into my humble pages." This may be true, but the humblest diary is a weapon, a bomb with an inexhaustible time-fuse which may explode uncomfortably in anyone's grave. After all, what we most fear to have told of us is the proper subject of a good private diary—not our public acts or even the secret schemes which underlie them, but the little

weaknesses and follies and ambitions which are tolerable in the light traffic of every day, but of which we should be heartily ashamed if they, and they only, represented us to posterity. Lady Castlemaine, we may be certain, though she would not care much for all the hard things that historians and moralists have said of her relationship with King Charles, would blush for that fragment of Pepys which tells how she suddenly called for a patch from the face of one of her women, "and wetted it and so clapped it on her own by the side of her mouth, I suppose she feeling a pimple rising there."

Why she should resent that reference we cannot in reason tell; it reveals nothing to her discredit, only that she had—as we knew already—a lively sense of approaching misfortune. But resent it she would. If she had known that Pepys would write it down and that all the world, for generations to come, would read it and smirk over it, she would never have forgiven him, and certainly would have taken extraordinary care to guard her words and her actions from him in future. And once we know that a man has a diary and keeps it with an observant conscience, we treat him instinctively with the suspicion that would have been hers. Therefore, let the diarist be secret, lest the world, like a hedgehog, curl itself up at his approach.

This is the first rule of diary keeping. All others are more disputable. Should the diary be regular or irregular? Regular, we answer, to be on the safe side; yet there have been many good diaries with more gaps than entries. It is, in any case, a fatal practice to attempt regularity in amount—to aim, as some do, at filling a page or two pages a day. For the same reasons it is foolish to strive for uniformity of style, or, indeed, for any style at all. The advantage of the diary-form is that it exempts its users from all the ordinary rules of the Press. You

may spell as you like, abbreviate as you like, wander into side-tracks as and when it pleases you. Above all, you need preserve no sense of proportion or of responsibility. A new hat may oust a new Parliament; a new actress who amused you or an old one who did not may, without anyone's complaining here or hereafter, sweep all the armies and potentates of Europe over your margin into nothingness and oblivion. No subject which was begun need be continued; no one who becomes a bore need be allowed to linger on the page; no feelings—not even the diarist's own—need be considered; no sense of a critical audience need force gaiety from a mood of sadness or cast a shadow on the spirits of Puck.

Why, then, does not every one keep a diary if it is so full of the delights of freedom and omnipotence? Perhaps the reason is that we like to have an audience for what we say and grow a little tired of entertaining our great-great-grandchildren. Some will have it that all diarists are vain. They seem, on the contrary, if they keep their secret and let no one pry into their locked drawer, to have an exceptional claim to be called modest. They may, of course, be puffing themselves up before the mirror of posterity, but that is so remote and pardonable a conceit—particularly if we remember that posterity is far more likely to mock than to admire—that no one who, while he turns over the blank pages of this year, wonders what other fingers will turn them some day, need be ashamed of his diarist's dream. Let him dip his industrious pen with courage, and snap his fingers at the sluggards who, if they guessed what he was about, would call him vain. Will the world care to know what such as he thought and did? Indeed it will in 200 years. And the humbler his estate, the more the world will be interested, for the records of the great are many, but the personal histories of the small and the mediocre are lamentably few. Pepys was

a courtier and an Admiralty man; but what should we not give for the diaries, if they had been able to write them, of a few of his wife's housemaids, or for a day-to-day commentary by the boy whose ears he boxed?

## ON GIVING BOOKS

There exists in many minds an obscure prejudice against the choice of books as presents. Often it has its origin in a remote childhood when there would appear at regular intervals on the breakfast table packages which seemed full of promise while string and sealing-wax were yet secure, but which, when eager scissors had done their work, revealed only an improving volume of ineffable dullness. There were aunts and uncles in those days, full of laziness and vanity, who chose books with an eye, not to a child's pleasure, but to parental approval. They had, moreover, a tactless habit of forgetting, not only that their nephews and nieces liked sometimes to be entertained rather than instructed, but that, as the years passed, babies became boys and boys grew into men. Their gifts, becoming standardized, were always an age behind the times. They would continue to dispatch picture books to their victims long after Scott had become to them a magician; they would send Henty to the Sixth Form and *The Three Midshipmen* to the Universities; they would enrage nieces, who had already built several empires behind the drums of Mr. Kipling, by offering them romances of high-school life. Year after year their gifts were received with mingled ribaldry and boredom until at last they became a laughing-stock. "Another book!" was their disgusted greeting, and off it went to the jumble-sale.

And thus it happened, by a subtle process of unreason,

that all books, received as presents on birthdays and at Christmas-time, became suspect. So often the child had turned their pages with disappointment and the boy with contemptuous indignation, that the man, though a great reader of books of his own choice, fought shy, and continues to fight shy, of choosing them for others. We do not say, even to ourselves, that a book is a dull present; that is too plainly a lying generalization. But the remembrance of early distress lingers on, and many have deep within them an instinctive reluctance, scarcely conscious and certainly unsupported by argument, to purchase books for their friends.

It is an unfortunate reluctance, for the giver of a well-chosen book is blessed in this, as in no other, gift. He may carry it home with him and may himself enjoy it before bidding it farewell; he may write in it his own as well as his friend's name, thus perpetuating his good wishes and earning for himself remembrance, not for an hour only, but on many an evening far away. A fly-leaf inscription, re-discovered long after the writer of it is forgotten, proves again and again to be the kindliest and the least self-conscious of epitaphs. And if the buyer of a book be of a practical mind and little careful for his own epitaph, he may yet be pleased after his own manner. He may wrap up his gift with perhaps less labour of brown paper than is required of him by any other offering, for none is more conveniently shaped; he may send it cheaply, and he may be glad in the thought that his few shillings have helped the art of letters to its not too frequent reward. How much pleasanter, after all, than a hundred things to smoke or a pound of food to eat! How much more amusing to send on its adventures some essay in immortality, however frail, however imperfect, than to lavish upon a well-fed acquaintance goods which are by name "perishable" and which they might have had weighed out to

them, in return for their own shillings, from any tradesman's pan!

But could they not equally have bought our volume over any bookseller's counter? Indeed they could not. They could have bought the same cigars, for we send them their favourite brand year after year; they could have bought the same chocolates, for it is their own chosen maker that we visit on their behalf birth day after birthday; but our own personality dwells in the choice of the book we send, and that is not to be had for all the shillings in the world. With works of art—and none is cheaper or more easily accessible than a book—we may send a part of ourselves. Therein lies the peculiarity and, as the obsolete uncles proved to us, the danger of the gift; therein lies also the pleasure of the giving.

## PATIENCE

According to high authority the game of patience is centuries old, and it is a commonplace that there are more forms of it than any single brain can hope to remember. Beyond that facts and statistics about it are hard to come by. Treatises on card-playing usually ignore it, and for a game that is played by thousands it is curious that it has no current or periodical literature. That being so, the question arises whether it is really a game. It takes two or more to play nearly all other games, unless exception is made for the dreary form of pitch and toss which Dickon Osbaldistone, the gambler of the family, played, right hand against left, on Sundays. Similarly patience must have originated as the desperate resource of some disappointed cardplayer whose antagonist had failed him. It was a substitute for the real thing. Cards not being balls or chessmen, with which it is impossible to play

fairly by oneself, but having lives and values of their own dependent every moment on mutations of number, place, and propinquity, chance allowed him while waiting, and suffering rather than acting, to evolve quite a decent amusement.

All patience games seem to rest on the same fundamental principle: given cards in any order, how by one means or another within regular rules to sort them into packs? That is the problem, and night after night, especially in fortuitous companies whom a common roof brings together in health resorts, it is attacked with determination by individuals of both sexes. No need to bother about the others; each has the sovereign remedy against solitariness, boredom, or factitious geniality. Seldom do two play together, though forms of double play exist, and some of them even lead to noise and scrambling as the end approaches; but the true patience player is quiet and self-centred. Partnership with another might lead ultimately to doings foreign to the spirit of the game—perhaps to another game entirely, even to bridge.

But bridge has nothing in common with patience, nor do patience players ever look like bridge players. Quote Matthew Arnold's line to them about patience, which he calls "close-lipped," and the "too near neighbour to despair," and they will fail to see the application. Much nearer to despair, as being a much more desperate business, is in their view bridge, and the ritual, solemnity, and etiquette of the card table generally. They shrink from such things. The cards they handle have no half-guilty excitements, but are only ascending or descending series of numbered slips to be got into order out of disorder. Nothing like tricks or trumps ruffles the precision of the procedure. The attempt finished, neither congratulation nor condolence is sought, and no punctilio dictates the prolongation of a sitting till past bed-time.

How far down in the social scale is the game of patience played? Presumably there is a limit, and an investigator who was curious on the point and took pains to collect evidence might reach some interesting results. Crossword puzzles are notoriously worked at by quite humble members of society even during working hours, if their occupation is not so continuous as to disallow the filling of a space, or the consultation of a furtive dictionary under cover of official paraphernalia. But puzzles do not want a table like patience, and patience never offers prizes. It is its own reward; so much so that when Faust is made to curse "patience above all" he cannot mean the game; indeed it is not called *Geduld* in Germany. Yet it is well named, since it implies endurance for endurance sake and nothing more, making no demand on hope like the crossword puzzle, which holds out the prospect of a fortune. It would make a good game for prisoners, especially if those who serve long sentences come of the patience-playing class; which may be doubtful, and is one of the reasons why the social status of the game should be investigated. The probability is that it is almost confined to persons whom an assured position in life leaves with few desires and none for unnecessary contact with strangers. For it is as a defence, as much as anything, that it is played in public rooms, and as such it is stronger than novels and papers, which are not proof against well-timed interruption. It is also long odds against anyone's knowing the form of the game actually being played.

To onlookers at a distance it fires a train of thought. Would the player play if he had the room to himself? What is his normal occupation at home? His present polite but impervious reserve perhaps bespeaks a mind commonly devoted to the highest themes but reluctant to pursue them in public. If so, how far is the game played at all in private? What boots it to build up and build

down except for purposes of defence? Once more, is it a game at all? For, if it is not Dickon's *pis-aller*, it must be one of the truest expressions of national character.

## ON FISHING AND TRUMPETING

A certain great manufactory of motor-cars is said by rumour to make also all the disparaging jokes about its own products. When we meet, in music-hall or comic paper, with jests about old iron or the danger of travelling at two miles an hour, we know at once what name is to crown the joke; and such jokes are so frequent that we must suppose the firm to produce one for each car. In a similar way, an ancient city in North Britain is said to be herself the origin of all the jokes against her inhabitants. When we receive a post-card showing her main street on a "flag-day," and see that, with one accord (dare we call it a *bon accord*?) every man, woman and child has decided to stay indoors till the raid is over, we are to understand that the post-card is "semi-inspired." The municipality itself has taken this adroit means of publishing the beauty of the street and driving home the lesson with a jest.

How, we may wonder, is this joke-making conducted? In the motor-car factory, do scores of operatives turn out the parts, to be assembled at discretion by superior workmen? Or does one lavishly paid man of genius labour single-handed? Do the city fathers sit in secret conclave, like the dreaded Twelve of Venice, and examine the tales of cheese-rind and of sixpences submitted by their expert? Or is rumour wrong in both cases? Have the motor-car manufacturer and the people of the northern town followed the more ingenious and frugal course of spreading the notion that they make their own jokes, and thus got the wit of all the English-speaking world for nothing?

Whichever the plan, it seems to work well for large factories and for famous cities. In private hands it is not always successful. He who indulges his diffidence by disparaging his worth may often have the mortification of finding himself taken at his own valuation. Where he expects, or at least would much enjoy, the assurance that his estimate is too low, he receives either an ironic question, such as: "What bait do you find the best?" (which is intended to accuse him of fishing for compliments), or—more galling still—the matter-of-fact assumption that his estimate is perfectly correct.

It is not with him as it is with great factories or cities. His joke is taken in the wrong way, or in earnest. Then, indeed, does he for a moment wish that he was one of those happy Chanteclers who are convinced that the sun only rises because they cock-a-doodle-doo. Now and then, it is true, we may see the rooster (in modern slang, the booster) neatly silenced. A favourite method used to be some such icy remark as: "Your trumpeter, it may be presumed, is down with influenza" (otherwise, runs the implication, you would not thus be blowing your own trumpet). But one of the diffident man's sharpest annoyances is to see that Chantecler, also, is usually taken at his own valuation. Cock-a-doodle-doo! cries the conceited bird; and Cock-a-doodle-doo! says the slavish echo. The true response, he feels, should in both cases be contradiction, of himself gentle, of Chantecler abrupt. The root of his trouble probably is that his self-disparagement carries no weight because he is not whole-heartedly convinced, as are Chantecler, the motor-car factory, and the city, of his own merit; nor is he genuinely diffident. It is good to be sincerely modest; it is good to have a proper pride in one's own worth. Best of all is not to care what other people think, and to go quietly on one's business, without either trumpeting or fishing.

## ON WASTE OF JUDGMENT

Whatever the cause may be—perhaps it is the need to judge men and things periodically at elections—there is no doubt that most people exercise their judgment much too freely. They have opinions, usually unfavourable, on many matters where they have not earned them either by knowledge or by thought. In expressing them, especially in letters to the Press, they start with the phrase "In my judgment," where the very word "judgment" should make them hesitate. For the fact is that no one has appointed them judges by profession, nor have most of them been trained in the trade. What we call judgment is prejudice or the result of a desire to be heard in some impressive manner. Things are happening all round them and they wish to play some part in them, so that, if they cannot be doing, they may at least be judging.

It is, no doubt, a discouraging thought that men are not competent to be judges on most matters; if that is true of the majority, it may be asked, how are affairs to be carried on? The answer is that men's judgment on most matters has no effect at all except, perhaps, to increase prejudice and darken counsel. When, for instance, the conduct of friends is judged and talked about with grave misgiving, they go on behaving as before; and so do the judges, when their friends judge them. If men want advice they ask it; otherwise they take their own.

The moral is not to have no judgment on any subject, which is impossible, but to exercise economy in judgment, to regard it as a process really judicial, which should not be undertaken without reason or knowledge or thought.

People must be judged if they have to be chosen for some purpose; but in that case the practical need itself is almost certain to supply some of the qualities of a judge. It is the habit of indiscriminate judgment without need that impairs those qualities; the habit of criticism, as a mere trick of the mind, that makes bad critics. The appointed Judge only decides matters that are brought before him, and decides them with a definite purpose. He gets the judicial habit of mind from hearing evidence and from the knowledge that his judgment will have a practical effect. There are some Judges, of course, who like to air their opinions on any subject from the seat of justice; but they are not usually the best. The good Judge is apt to be slow in forming an opinion, and still slower in expressing it.

The worst of indiscriminate judgment is that it causes other indiscriminate judgment. The saying "Judge not that ye be not judged" is a simple truth; for those who are always sitting in judgment on people and things provoke retaliation. Their conduct is looked into curiously, and no excuse will be made for it. It is pleasant to catch them out in some folly; but indulgence will be shown to those who judge with reluctance, as if it were a disagreeable, not an agreeable, function; and their judgment is respected when it is forced out of them. But, since most men, unfortunately, have the habit of indiscriminate judgment, they arouse it in each other so that the world is full of the noise of it. Political violence on one side provokes it on the other; and public men are so often reviled for bad reasons that there is no distinguishing when they are condemned for good ones. Nor do they themselves distinguish, they are so constantly abused that they pay no heed to any criticism except when it is expressed in the practical form of votes. They expect the world to be unreasonable, and, while they speak with respect of

public opinion, despise it in their hearts. The simple remedy is that no one should feel called upon to judge them unless he has some reason for his judgment. If judgment were not wasted it would soon be more respected.

## GREEN SPECTACLES

It is unfortunate that a ridiculous suggestion has clung about green spectacles ever since Moses Primrose made his famous purchase at the fair. But their usefulness cannot be questioned in protecting the eyesight against other objects of unaccustomed brilliance, including the English summer sun. Green spectacles well deserve the place which they have won in shop windows among tourists' requisites. In a green land, and under a sun which is usually meek and half-hearted, attention is more apt to be focused on the appearance of their wearer than on the comfort which he or she derives from them. In fatigue and under a glaring sky they do more than relieve the eyes; they often soothe the whole system, dispelling headache, lessening muscular weariness, and restoring a reasonable appetite in place of unquenchable and unwholesome thirst.

There is little reason why the comfort of these beneficent orbs should be restricted to trips to the desert or climbs among Alpine rocks and glaciers. Sight-seeing in Paris or in London can be as fatiguing as mountain-climbing, and is achieved in a much less invigorating air. Only excessive self-consciousness or a regrettable indifference to the feelings of the brute creation allows the holiday-maker to deck himself in a pair of miniature moons of green cheese where there is nothing to frighten but goats or marmots, yet urges him to stuff them into his portmanteau when he finds himself again in city streets.

Human experience and that of the beasts of the field combine to suggest that we might be the better for wearing green spectacles always. Observe how the industrious appetite of the cow, forcing her to gaze continually on green grass, inspires her with the same contented placidity which we feel when we occasionally put on green goggles under stress of weather. It is true that the same habituation to green appears to make her lord, the bull, particularly intolerant of its complementary colour, but that would be cured if bulls, too, wore green spectacles.

It is a mistake to suppose, as do some abstainers from these aids, that the universe as seen through them is reduced to one monotonous colour. They show the nicest art in preserving the due relations of colour, yet in accommodating them all to the tint which brings healing and good temper. Travellers well know how a cow-like placidity is earnestly to be desired in custom-houses, in queues at ticket-offices, and in other places where there is no cure but time. Much relief might be afforded in such cases by putting on green spectacles, whether in sunshine or in shade; and there is many a minor official whose appearance would be vastly improved by such an altering medium. In other emergencies of travel, where patience is less necessary than decision, help might be found in an extension of the same principle, and courage whipped up by changing green spectacles for red. These do no appear to be on the market at present, but it would be easy to provide them. Apart from the wholesome stimulation of the wearer's offensive spirit, the sight of him so strangely fortified would shake considerably the adversary's *moral*. For alternative use as a sedative or a stimulant, spectacles might be provided by the ministers of the tourist traffic with divided eyepieces of red and green, on the principle so far utilized for near and distant vision. An irruption of visitors so equipped would make all countries brighter.

## ON BEING DIFFERENT

In any company there is always to be found one whose pride it is that he is different from his fellows. He is, we are to understand, a being apart. However various and conflicting the views of others may be, he certainly will agree with none of them. Carrying to its final extreme the doctrine that the majority is always wrong, he is never happy unless he is in a minority of one. At the first sign that he is attracting a convert he instantly shifts his ground lest his magnificent independence should be corrupted by what he regards as the degrading companionship of the herd. His principal source of unhappiness is that, in normal times, the world, indifferent to his eccentricities, lightly passes him over as an affected freak; none but those who are very easy game will flatter him by being startled or shocked.

But whenever public opinion is sharply divided into opposing camps he receives his reward. Annual elections are for him an annual opportunity. He has only to let fall some deliberately fantastic opinion to have it fiercely contested on every side. Eager canvassers labour to persuade him whom nothing, not even the thunderbolts of Heaven itself, can ever persuade into a stable conviction. He smiles upon them his aloof, complacent, enigmatic smile. What, they ask, is the fault in their argument? Does he agree with this section or that of the policy of their opponents? If so, they will try to expose its fallacy. But no: he does not care to find fault; he agrees with no one and with nothing; he is not at all concerned with their fallacies. What, then, is his attitude? they ask in despair. "My attitude," he replies, "is perfectly clear,"

and forthwith starts a new ball rolling with some obscure suspicion, some dark hint, some wild theory more foolish and irrelevant than the last.

If he were but deceiving others he might receive as much credit for wit as is due to most practical jokers. The "different" man, however, invariably deceives himself. He believes in his heart that he is different, not only in politics but in all the affairs of life, and when there is no General Election to bring the world into his net he practises his trade upon a narrower acquaintance. He disagrees with every Judge and every jury; he will not read a book that the critics have praised, and goes secretly, if he goes at all, to the plays that his friends have enjoyed. Even in his own home his superiority is continually proclaimed. He keeps silence while domestic argument proceeds; he bides his time, knowing that in the end some rash debater, seeking an ally, will turn to him with: "Don't you think so?" Then, in his best manner, he puts them all in their place. He shows them how wrong they are, how ignorant, how deep in the paths of vulgar prejudice; and they, unless they have already come to realize that his trick of unexpectedness is no more than a trick, may by their astonishment and incredulity give him the applause that his vanity demands. "Ah, you're different from us," they may say; and he, swelling with secret pride, will prepare another bomb. Against such as he there is but one defence—to agree and pass on. So long as anyone stoops to argue with his perverse folly he will never be made to believe that eccentricity is not independence or that to differ is not always to be wise.

# LUCK AND LAW

The story of Michael Henchard, told by Mr. Thomas Hardy in his novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, suggests an old puzzle: the relation of circumstance and character. Much of Henchard's misfortune was plainly the result of his own obstinacy and wrong-headedness; and yet that will not wholly explain the succession of blows that fell upon him. It looks as if his first great error, the sale of his wife, had been more than a violent expression of his character. The deed seems to have let loose a stream of bad luck, in which he must ever after be carried along; as if he had defied fate, and fate had taken up his challenge. Blameworthy though he was, he was also very unlucky. Most of us have among our acquaintance people who are unlucky. Nothing seems to go right with them. On the days of their tennis parties it always rains. Their motor-cars are always breaking down. Burglars choose their house to rob. Their work goes awry. And so, from small to great, bad luck pursues them. And yet, so far as we know, they never sold their wives, and they are not to our knowledge stiff-necked, wrong-headed, defiant of fate. We are almost persuaded to believe that the immutable law, which governs the weather, the action of machinery, and all else, had a personal aim at making them unhappy.

They seem to think so themselves; and that may be a clue. When people think themselves unlucky, and complain with a "just my luck" and so forth that fate is against them, they call their own and their friends' attention to all that goes wrong with them and to nothing that goes right. They may have as much good fortune as

the rest, but they do not notice it nor let others notice it. And though these whining ways are very unlike the masterful courage of a Henchard, it is not impossible that they have a practical effect on circumstance. This way of looking at life cannot alter the immutable law; the rain takes no heed of just and unjust, nor the sun of evil and of good. It cannot even attract untoward circumstance, except in so far as grumbling is a very tiring occupation, which may well sap the health. But it can create about the grumbler a spiritual atmosphere of misfortune, so that everything which the immutable law brings about shall be turned by himself to his discomfort.

The fact must ever be the same; the interpretation of the fact in terms of happiness and unhappiness depends entirely upon the person. The law may strike blows, apparently undeserved, inexplicable in terms of personal life. War, pestilence, accident (as we call it) by land and sea, do not pick and choose with any regard to character and desert. But, while some people suffer such blows with courage and endurance, others live in a daily round of great or petty misfortune. And it is these who reveal anew the old truth that luck is the result of character, and that there is no such being as an unlucky person in the common usage of the word. In one sense it is not their fault that it rains at their tennis parties and that their motor-cars break down; and yet in another sense it is their fault, since they have set themselves at loggerheads with the law and live in a spirit of accusation against it. Certainly, in one capitally important field of human life this spirit has a direct and visible action upon circumstance. Nothing kills human affection so quickly as the "nobody loves me" attitude; and, when supposed bad luck includes the loss of friends, there is no need to look far for the cause.

## UNPOPULARITY

It is often said that boys are good judges of character, and this must mean that they are better judges than men. No one says that men are good judges, and the statement would be meaningless, since we have nothing to compare them with. But it is not likely that boys, because of their youth and inexperience, are better judges of character than men, unless indeed experience is always a bad teacher —which is absurd. Probably the legend has grown because boys have an instinctive, almost animal, sense of the weaknesses of their teachers; they know very precisely when they can take liberties with a master and when they cannot; and if they do make a mistake on that point they are taught sharply not to make it again. But this sense of weaknesses does not make them good judges of character—it is a special, purely utilitarian, sense, like that which tells a beggar whom to importune. The boy is interested in one thing about his master—namely, whether or no liberties can be taken with him; and, just because his interest is thus specialized, it makes him sharp on this one point.

He will in the same way torment another boy if he can easily be tormented; but that also does not prove him a good judge of the other boy's character. Often boys who turn out remarkable men are "ragged" at school, because, as boys, they are very self-conscious or sensitive, or, owing to faculties that have not yet found a vent, are in some way disagreeable to their fellows. Boys, being imitative and gregarious, are apt to resent those who differ from them without knowing why; but this primitive resentment, which exists also in men and is one of the chief

obstacles to human progress, does not make them good judges of character; it merely gives them very decided tastes which they express in a forcible way. It has been said, and no doubt truly, that a boy, no matter how peculiar, will escape ragging if he is full of courage and retaliates at once. Swinburne, for instance, the most peculiar of boys, was little ragged at Eton and enjoyed his life there because of his high courage. But many boys who become remarkable men lack this courage in boyhood. Shelley was fearless morally and even physically; but he was ragged at Eton because he flew into rages or because he could not endure physical pain; and it cannot be said that his fellows showed their judgment of character in tormenting him.

To suppose that boys are good judges of character, and have good reasons when they choose a victim, is to be cruelly unjust to the victim. He does not know why he is tormented, nor does anyone else, and, if he is to be despised by masters as well as boys because he is tormented, his lot is hard indeed. Even where boys seem to have good reason for disliking another boy, the worst possible treatment of his faults is to torment him; that way they are suppressed rather than cured. Besides, boys are merciless to some real faults, while to others no less real they are lenient, or even esteem them virtues.

There is an easy good nature that comes merely of wishing to be popular, which does make a boy popular while he is a boy, though it may make him dull and a moral coward when he is a man; and there is a blind, uneasy passion for perfection which makes a boy bitter and unpopular while he is a boy, though it may be a presage of greatness in the man. Further, the boy who is tormented and despised at one stage of his school life attains to a sudden and unaccountable success at another. He may start as a rebel and then make good his rebellion, become a

privileged person, a school character, an oddity, perhaps, but one of which the other boys are proud. But the boys who judged him wrongly at one period do not deserve much credit for changing their opinion. Indeed, it is not really an opinion at all, but an instinct; and these instincts of the young creature, though not evil, are blind and unconscious. Boys like a boy if they find his company agreeable, and dislike him if they find it disagreeable; but they do not know why they find it either, they simply react in the most direct way to pleasure or the opposite, and there is little significance in their reactions.

If they themselves knew this, and if their victims and favourites knew it, schools would be happier and wiser places. We are all absurd creatures, and the way to wisdom and kindness, for boys no less than men, is to know it. Much harm has been done, especially by story-books, through taking boys too seriously, thinking them both wiser and wickeder than they are. They are seldom wise, never perhaps wicked, but they are often naughty and silly as well as delightful; and, if they knew that they were naughty and silly, they would be more like children and less like solemn savages.

## THE MANUFACTURE OF GENIUS

This exhortation, "Don't send money," catches the eye in a certain kind of advertisement, especially in American papers and magazines, and besides exciting the reader's curiosity it gives him confidence. Here is some one advertising, not for the usual reason, and often there is a photograph too of the gentleman who does not want your money, but who does want to do you good. If you will cut out the coupon at the bottom of the page and send it to him with a stamp of a specified amount he will com-

municate to you some secret which he has discovered about human nature, and which he cannot keep to himself.

He is, in fact, the preacher of a new gospel, and he gives you appetizing snacks of it in his advertisement. You can be anything you want to be, he tells you; there is not a desire that you cannot accomplish. Success beyond your wildest dreams awaits you, and it is to be got, not by taking pills, the old cure for all diseases of the body, but by reading his book, a new cure for all limitations or disabilities of the mind. You may not know yet what it is that you do desire, but his book will tell you. It will lay bare to you the secrets of your own "unconscious," for this philanthropist has discovered that your unconscious is your good genius, your guardian angel, a kind of magician you keep somewhere inside you, unknown to yourself but known to him. He has the key by which you can unlock the cupboard in which this unconscious is hidden, and he will send it to you for a twopenny or two-cent stamp.

All this is much pleasanter than the teaching of Freud, who tells you that you lock your unconscious up because it is so horrid and who will put into plain German for you the disgusting insinuations which it whispers to you in dreams. The unconscious of the advertisement "wants to help you"; like the advertiser himself, it wants to make you "master of your own destiny." It will give you genius; in fact, it is genius; and you differ from Michelangelo or Beethoven or Napoleon only because hitherto you have not been aware of this genius imprisoned within you and longing to get out. There are even testimonials from hundreds who have set their unconscious free, and who now feel like Michelangelo or Beethoven or Napoleon, whichever of these famous men is most to their taste.

But it is at this point that a doubt chills the reader. Geniuses in the past have been very rare; and if now a means has been discovered of turning every one into a

genius, why is it that they have not become common? One has not heard anything yet of the art of these Michelangelos, the music of these Beethovens, the will-force of these Napoleons. If, as yet, there are only a hundred where once there was one, it ought already to have made some difference. And the advertiser himself, the discoverer and first master of the secret—why is it that he does not, in his advertisement, speak with the tongues of men and angels? Why does his style, with that genius unlocked inside him, yet remain so banal? Can it be that a fig brings forth these thistles, so like the old food for donkeys of the old quack advertisements? No doubt some of the readers of his book think that genius has been set free within them; but by their fruits ye shall know them; no man's opinion of his own genius is to be trusted.

What is needed is some before-and-after test, like the photographs of a head of hair before and after the application of an elixir. Let there be a concert of music composed before and after reading the book, the former imitation ragtime, the latter like Mozart as he would write if he were alive now. It is not enough that the patients or pupils of the new magician should all "feel so happy," like the spirits who communicate with us through mediums; their happiness may be too dearly bought if they have been changed from modest mediocrities into triumphant bores, if the only difference is that now they think they can do what once they knew they could not do. It is a fact that quack medicines can effect faith-cures; but can the conversation of a club-bore be made interesting by his conviction that his unconscious has been set free? We shall not believe it until we have ourselves applied the before-and-after test to him; and meanwhile we have a suspicion that the advertiser, in whose integrity we firmly believe, may be a club-bore himself, who, not content with his club, is ambitious to inflict his doctrine on mankind.

## GIRTH AND GOODNESS

It is always a comfort to find the latest discoveries of science confirming the teachings of the past. It is many a long year since great Cæsar exclaimed, together with many other reverberating things, "Let me have men about me that are fat." Now from the National Surety Company of New York comes the Amen of exact science. Mr. William Shakespeare the poet is supported by the actuary, who brings facts and figures to show that fat men are in cold mathematical truth a more honest lot than thin ones.

The Surety Company is accustomed to insure churches against the risk that those who collect or guard their funds will go off with them, to insure business houses against defaulting accountants, and in general to accept premiums to cover loss through the unreliability of other people. It has watched and measured human probity for many years. It praises the honesty of other large classes—women, the married in general, Chinese. But it has a special word for the stout. There is, indeed, one other class that receives high commendation—those who do a little light cursing. No longer need the missionary Bishop weep over his flock because

> Some sailors whom he did not know
> Had taught them "bother," also "blow,"
> Of wickedness the germs,

for there are now available the latest American figures to prove that "bother" and "blow" are in reality among the aids to morality. These Sauls, too, are among the prophets. A little gentle swearing helps men to keep on the fairway in life. The Surety Company has been bitten

in its day by those who set too tight a watch upon their lips and relaxed their vigilance against the temptations of acquisitiveness.

But those whose mouths keep open house for words with no position in society, even for disreputable ejaculatory sounds, do not need the friendly statistic so much as the fat men. It is they who will be relieved, if surprised, to learn that their great prototype Falstaff would have been a good insurance risk in New York. A man of such genial dimensions could always be trusted where money was concerned. Fat men tend to be modest, perhaps in apology for taking up so much room, but generally because they do not feel the need for asserting themselves or for making the earth realize that they are on it. And they are likely to wonder a little at the connexion between moral goodness and avoirdupois. As the modern knowledge becomes more widely diffused, it is going to be much more pleasant for them at the tailor's. Instead of having it broken to them, as something to be borne bravely, that the next suit will have to be a little fuller, they will hear the cheerful tailor, his own prospects of settlement brightening, exclaim : " Getting a little more honest, Sir." Their later years will be, as they should be, a triumphal progress towards perfect virtue.

But they may still ask themselves why. They will not worry over it, for worry is the prerogative of their lean brethren. But they will ask whether they are more honest because they carry their comfort with them, and being comfortable, feel kind. Or is it something deeper, that they enjoy a large content and are already rich in their solid persons, so that they are satisfied to be, whereas men less complete strive to do, hoping to lessen their inadequacy by their achievements, and planning, need money, and, needing money, take it ? Or is it, as eagle-eyed Cæsar asserted, that fat men sleep too much to make

good plotters? Or is it simply that they know too well that for them honesty is the only policy? Their thinner comrades can seize the cash-box and are up the chimney or away in a flash on those nimble legs of theirs. But the stout man is lucky if he has breath enough for the plausible falsehoods that are his only chance. He cannot disguise himself as a thin man. For him there is no refuge beneath the sofa or behind the curtain, and he has nothing to hope from running away.

## FACE VALUE

Every well-brought-up child knows that people who indulge in angry or bitter thoughts are apt to develop "sour faces." Nor are well-brought-up children alone in this wholesome faith. From time immemorial the world has consented to take men and women at their "face value," and has adhered doggedly to the belief that, in general, human nature becomes imprinted on human features. Thus there is a language of facial expression which is current throughout all peoples and to the vocabulary of which artists of every race have contributed. The possessor of a candid pair of eyes is accounted trustworthy in every land; the shifty gaze rouses the same suspicion wherever it falls. And so it is also with those qualities and inflections of expression which, by reason of their swiftness or subtlety, cannot be described in words. They are indices of character the value of which has been endorsed by universal experience.

That they may, in addition, indicate a state of physical fitness or unfitness is widely recognized. The whole practice of medicine in days gone by was founded on this assumption, and such words as sanguine, melancholic, plethoric, and choleric remain to bear witness to its truth.

These have become descriptions of mental rather than of physical traits, yet in their first use they were as strictly terms of the consulting-room as are, to-day, dyspeptic or rheumatic. The old doctors believed that every "habit of body" possessed its corresponding habit of mind, and they were of opinion, further, that any disorder of the vital organs was bound to find expression in that mirror of the mental activities, the face. So they studied the faces of their patients with all the care and enthusiasm at their command, and, as their observations were multiplied and extended, grew bold in drawing swift conclusions from this study. Again and again in their writings references occur to the "face of disease," and descriptions are given of the looks and expressions of the victims of consumption, cancer, rheumatism, and other ailments.

In some instances, moreover, the physician felt himself able to go beyond mere diagnosis. He had observed appearances indicative of a tendency to disease and so was able to warn his patients beforehand of the risks which they ran. Outbursts of temper or emotional expressions, which to the uninitiated suggested merely a trait of character, informed him rather of dispositions towards illness or of the earliest workings of some disorder. Thus he came to adopt a view of human nature different in essence from that held by laymen. Character belonged to the body as well as to the spirit and represented much more than the interaction of physical forces.

The coming of the "scientific age" discounted to a large extent the art of the physician. Disease rather than its victim commanded attention, and the study of men and women in health and sickness fell into abeyance as a method the usefulness of which had passed away. A man, it seemed, might smile and smile, and be a villain; on the other hand he was not likely to succeed thus easily in hiding his villainy from the eye of a laboratory worker,

armed with the apparatus of modern science. Time, however, is revenging the old doctors. Within the last few years Science herself has turned curious eyes towards their art. Extensive and prolonged researches, which have recently been completed, have revealed the fact that facial changes do in fact occur in connexion with a large number of diseases and that they are characteristic of the disorders originating them. These facial changes exert, of course, an influence on expression. Thus the "mirror of character" reflects new and unaccustomed traits when disease has established itself within the body. The ascertained fact that a complete change of nature accompanied by a change of expression may follow an attack of *encephalitis lethargica* is a modern and very striking illustration of this process.

## ON KEEPING FIT

Those who find themselves about the middle of the evening in London streets comparatively unfrequented at that hour sometimes become aware of a pattering sound which suggests neither the ordinary human tread nor the sound of horses. Presently lightly-clad youths dash past, legs flashing bare, feet rubber-shod; earnest members of some athletic club training under difficulties. It needs courage, and a certain imperviousness to satire, to career about the streets of London, even at night, in running shorts. The fact that men will do it, and do it at the end of a day of toil, is significant of the lengths to which they will go in search of physical fitness. They have their more conspicuous compeers, who submit themselves to an iron discipline for a boat-race or a boxing contest. These are able to make their training something of a whole-time occupation, and possibly find no little consolation in

the fact that their agonies are endured more or less in the eye of an adoring public.

But all have one trait in common. They are inspired by the thought of some approaching crisis. It is there, fixed and specific, to be slaved for and fought through, giving promise of eventual relaxation and enjoyment of the fruits of victory. A much greater measure of determination is wanted when there is no such lodestar. That is the problem of those whom the numbing hand of time or circumstance holds back from high physical endeavour. Even for them there is no lack of hope, and elderly men perform prodigies of Spartan and Berserk valour before open windows on chilly mornings, or practise on the bathroom floor feats calculated to keep them contortionists at seventy.

The wonder is that those who will go through so much for physical fitness do not see the wider implications of their philosophy. For there is a fatness of the mind and spirit which is no less afflicting to its victim and no less unsightly to the beholder than the fatness of body which they so assiduously shun. The man who will spend a wealth of thought on taking inches off his waist measurement forgets altogether the greater need of keeping within bounds his mental and moral girth. Here and there perchance may be found some

> "gray spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge like a sinking star."

But the man is rare who will deliberately read metaphysics or Blue-books on local taxation, not of course for pleasure, but as a mental gymnastic.

There are perhaps still fewer who will face a similar effort for the fitness of the moral self; who strive to make it a "lean long-walker," and to keep it from degenerating into a comfortable creature of the deep arm-chair. But

it can be done. Boy Scouts are enjoined to do their one good deed a day, with liberty, it is presumed, to exceed the minimum. Philosophers have advocated, for the training of the will, the doing daily something that one hates the thought of doing. This is admittedly a high, cold world of effort. There will be none of the warmth and colour, none of the inspiration, of a definite and dated contest before applauding crowds. There will be no crown, not even a wreath of wild olive. The fitness to be sought is no temporary, *ad hoc* excellence, but an unremitting and unassuming exercise of faculty according to the best that is in it. It is as true as ever that this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting. There is no relief from the need of that "painful practice" which Pericles paradoxically disclaimed for his wonderful Athenians. And, last blow of all, there must not even be any very profound satisfaction in the success of the effort. That way lies a spiritual pride which undoes everything.

But if the virtue of this fitness must be its own reward, and even at that must remain unclaimed, at least it will not come empty-handed to the fit man's fellows. And, after all, this continuous and general activity of the moral nature at its highest pitch sounds strangely like the Aristotelian definition of happiness.

## THE INTERESTS OF OLD AGE

A woman has recently died in Spain at the age of 110. Now that a German man of science has created a synthetic vitamin, it will ere long become the duty of every one to live to the age of Methuselah; but already centenarians seem to be so many that soon no newspaper will trouble to mention them and no telegrams of congratulation will be sent to them. Few ordinary people wish to live to the

age of one hundred; but nearly every one feels that it would be very interesting to talk with one who is a hundred not out and, like the Spanish woman recently deceased, is mentally and physically normal to the last. To have been born in the reign of King George IV; to have known at first hand that Early Victorian period which every youngster of to-day imagines as a benighted and brutal barbarism that began when the Flood subsided and ended in the year of his own birth; to have been mature at the time of the Mutiny and middle-aged when voting by ballot came in—this is to be not only venerable and monumental but a treasure-house of interesting information.

And the lure of talking with very old people (eighty-five, say, is old enough for the spell to work) is the hope that they will open out their memories not of the politics and the history that are in the books, but of the shyer matters of which even the modern domestic school of historians cannot give the very truth. What it was like to go by coach or by chaise; what it was like to wear a crinoline; to bowl in a top-hat, before even the low-crowned or "bowler" hat was invented; to dine at five o'clock; to snuff candles and wind up the oil-lamp; to see Charles Kean or Macready; to ride daily to business along London roads that had only lately been changed to macadamite from adamite; to read Dickens hot from the press, and to accompany, with much graceful play of wrist and arm, on a tall, silk-fronted piano, the flute of a whiskered and chokered gentleman hopefully suspected by Mamma of "intentions"—that is the kind of thing which we fancy that very old people may help us not so much to know as to feel.

Unfortunately that is the kind of thing about which most very old people are obstinately disinclined to talk. Convinced that the manners and morals of their descendants are abominable, they may be roused now and then to a

fine snort of indignant reminiscence. When a great-niece discusses Freud at luncheon, or a grandson lights a cigarette in the drawing-room, we may hear, "In my time no woman read *Vanity Fair* until she was married," or, "When I was your age, I could only smoke in the kitchen, after they had all gone to bed." But about what life was like in those days they will too often keep silence. It may be that they are afraid of being laughed at; or rather (for they are not wont to show any form of cowardice) that their memories are too sacred and too precious for the youthful and therefore profane vulgar. More often the cause of their reticence is the very quality which has enabled them to grow old; and that is their indefeasible youthfulness. Their old age is green because they have taken life as it came and lived in every new moment; not peevishly turning their backs upon the present and condemning the future before they knew it, but looking about them and ahead of them with courage and interest.

Old days and old ways are all very well for brooding over when one is alone and a little drowsy. When younger people are present, the old want to hear about television and airplanes, and how soon the transmission of pictures by wireless will be in common use, and what is the latest element to be discovered. We must not be impatient with them if they show that their minds are still receptive and decline to be treated as too old to learn. A better way is to win their sympathy and confidence, to answer their questions as best may be, and gently to convince them that some younger people are as eager to know about the past as some old people are to know about the present and the future. The reward may be something worth hearing, for old people who have no interest in the present have rarely any interest in the past.

## A TASTE FOR COLOUR

How far does the taste for colour arise from some moral characteristic? It seems to be connected with a certain freedom and spontaneity of character; those who fear bright colour are apt to be those who fear other people's opinions, who wish to "escape notice," like the mimetic animals. If this is so, we may understand how the fear of colour prevails in our modern urban world. We are all a little afraid of each other, at least of each other in crowds. We do not wish to be shouted at; and the crowd, just because its items are insignificant, likes to assert its collective power by suppressing any originality in an individual, likes to turn on him and single him out, and abash him with a phrase, often absurdly happy. The laughter of a crowd will frighten a brave man more than its anger; the one he will face on a point of duty; but he will not face the other on a point of art. And so we all, even the bravest of us, tend to drabness and associate it unconsciously with safety, with law and order, with common sense. Not only in our clothes, but also in our decorations, domestic, and even ecclesiastical, we play for this safety and see danger in the colours of the sunlight and the garden and the Alpine slopes.

But these colours may be dangerous indeed if imitated in mere rebellion and without knowledge or taste. All bright colours are not good, as some of our new garden flowers, especially roses, prove. There is even a science of colour, known to the Persians and the Chinese but not known to us. Their colours, in all their subtle and daring diversity, look as if they were lit by the same sunlight. A Persian carpet, a Chinese embroidery, seems to have

the sunlight in it, as if it were a bed of real flowers glowing in a real sun; nor can we doubt that there is in these miracles of colour a memory, perhaps unconscious, of actual flowers and actual sunlight. They derive from Nature as pictures do, only more indirectly; they draw on experience, as music does, and transfigure it in terms of their own art.

And they tell us another thing, which we often ignore—namely, that there is no such thing as colour by itself apart from form. We see in Nature a flush of scarlet in a field and cry: "What beautiful colour"—but it is not merely beautiful colour. It consists also of individual poppies, though we cannot see them; and the colour in each of these is bounded, shaded, and subtilized by the form; it cannot be reproduced by a smudge of paint in a picture, which will spoil the colour in leaving out the form. And there is form also in the most abstract patterns of carpets or embroidery, as in the "coloured" sounds of the orchestra. Above all, there is a nice discrimination of quantities; for harmony of colour depends, not only on the colours that are used, but on the proportion in which they are used.

The Persians and the Chinese can do anything with colours, because they know how to proportion them. They know the science of subsidiary discords, without which all colour is insipid; and the science of echoes; and the science, almost ignored by us, of different shades of the same colour, by means of which the very accidents of sunlight and shadow seem to flush a formal design. But all this science could not be, without form, without pattern, and boundary. In fact, good colour must be simultaneously conceived as form, as in good music melody and harmony are simultaneous; and all this means that the colour-sense is not merely a sense, but also a science, based on the love and observation of natural beauty, but

expressing itself, as in music, in its own gradually discovered terms. Without that science timidity is only natural, for disaster is certain; and our mistakes caused by our lack of science, our ignorance even of the fact that there is a science of colour, have made us timid. But we need to desire colour, to feel the value of it, before we can wish to master the science. Colour is more than an ornament. It is also an expression of the joy of life—lacking which, we lose our belief in it. If we are colourists we live in a kind of intimacy with the flushing sky and all the other coloured felicities of Nature; if not, we withdraw into our own drab, uncreative selves, of which our colourless world is a chaotic image.

## THE TYPICAL ENGLISHMAN

A recent notice in *The Times* personal column invited a "typical English gentleman" to pose for photographic advertising. By the terms of the offer he was to be "young, tall, and fair," but no other restriction was set upon any man's choice of himself as an ideal representative of his nation. The field of honour was allowed to be very wide, for even the prescribed boundaries of youth, height, and fairness are more variable than exact, and are open to the opposed interpretations of modesty and conceit. Are forty years too many and seventy inches too few? Every man's answer will depend upon his own age and stature and upon his desire, or alternatively his reluctance, to be regarded as "a typical English gentleman."

For it is not to be assumed that there is a universal wish to be so considered. There are thousands who would be so shocked by the offer of such a title that they point their shoes in the Parisian manner and encourage their youthfully romantic whiskers with all the blandishments

of Spain. A suggestion that they were typically English would be received by them as an insult. They have an elegant contempt for the nation to which they belong, or to which they have at least attached themselves. Invite them to self-analysis and they will murmur smoothly of European culture. Speak to them of heredity and, with a flutter of their stout young hands, they will imperturbably discuss the problem of cosmopolitan descent. But typically English? No, no, no—not that! Having enjoyed so much emphasis they will smile with all their teeth and thus persuade even the dull English to agree with them.

But are the dull English themselves able to give a definition of their own type? What picture have they in their own minds of him who might with reason pose before a camera as a "typical English gentleman"? If, for the sake of shortening argument, we allow that he must be "young, tall, and fair," there yet remains to be supplied a description of his lips, his eyes, and, above all, of his hands—physical features that reveal his character. Foreigners, particularly in those moments when ill will guides their satirical pencils, have a clear view both of his outward appearance and of its implied nature. They see him as a thin, fanged, hollow-cheeked giant, sharp with the angles of arrogance and heavy with the boots of stupidity and didacticism. That portrait of him we know to be unjust; we are prepared to swear, at any rate, that, contrary to the opinion of European caricaturists, a typical Englishman seldom wears a kilt, and that the thickness of his boots is due rather to the climate in which he is accustomed to live than to any brutal desire in him to tread upon the corns of sensitive strangers.

The portrait that they draw of him when they are annoyed is indeed inaccurate, but is it any more inaccurate than his own traditional representation of himself as John Bull? Cast that aside and what is there left? Ours is

a race mixed and various, the product of conquests and "absorptions," of the strangest commingling of fierceness, tolerance and chance. From one source we draw that stolidity which strangers call dullness; from other sources, many of them Celtic, that swiftness of imagination, which the dull call erratic. Less easily, perhaps, than any other people are we to be summed up in a single portrait. John Bull is certainly not our physical representative, nor is there any obvious substitute for him. A substitute may now be discovered, but it is to be presumed that of all the tall, fair young gentlemen who offer themselves to be photographed, not one will resemble the portly yeoman of tradition, or will present himself to his prospective employer with a ferocious bulldog sniffing at his heels.

## THE ARCH-VILLAIN

We all like tremendous villains in fiction; in fiction they abound, from Iago to Count Fosco. And now, we are told, we are to have another on the films, a Chinaman, "tall, lean, feline, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull and long magnetic eyes of the true cat green." He is to have the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race accumulated in one giant intellect; he is to be the yellow peril incarnate in one man. This is as it should be; for these villain-heroes convince us most when they are farthest from the world of our own experience. Iago was a subtle Italian, and so was Count Fosco; many things, we think, are possible to an Italian that are not possible to an Englishman, and still more to a Chinaman, who comes from the other side of the world. No doubt the Chinese, if they have our taste for arch-villains, import them from Europe with all the cruel cunning of the West, with a brow like Confucius

and a face like a Chinese demon, with flowing hair and short, magnetic eyes of the true tiger-brown, the white peril incarnate in one man.

For, since the arch-villain is always some one nobody has ever met, he is most credible when most exotic in all his circumstances. Then we are least aware of the fundamental incongruity in him—namely, the combination of crime with giant intellect. For the worst criminals of fact, though sometimes they are clever in detail, would not be criminals at all if they had giant intellects. The wicked man of giant intellect may exist, but he uses his giant intellect to prevent himself from falling too far below the normal level of conduct. Cæsar Borgia himself, in so far as he fell below that level, was not clever, but stupid; and as for the criminal Roman Emperors, such as Nero, they always got themselves killed, which was not clever at all. The trouble with Count Fosco, the best of all modern villains, is that he never manages to do anything worth doing, with all his Satanic genius. Wilkie Collins makes us believe in him as a character, but when he comes to action he is like a hippopotamus picking up a pin. On the larger stage of the world he is only a spy; and a villain of genius ought to have found something better, or worse, to do than that.

Let us hope, then, that this Chinese villain will do something worthy of his Shakespearian brow and his Satanic face; that he will, for instance, be filled with a passionate desire for Oriental vengeance against the West, as Milton's Satan is filled with a passionate desire for vengeance against the Supreme Being. The great villain is most satisfying when he has a great cause. That means that he is not entirely a villain, since he is able to forget himself in his cause, however evil that may be. The villain of reality cannot forget himself in anything. Wainwright, the poisoner, for instance, was the slave of his own in-

ordinate vanity, which made him ridiculous as well as wicked. He would not be remembered as a writer if he had not been a murderer, for his writing is tawdry with egotism; one can see that he is always concerned with himself, not with his subject. In fact, real villains are apt to be bores; and they can be made amusing in fiction only if they have qualities incompatible with the sheer wickedness of their conduct. That is why we have some liking for Milton's Satan and for Count Fosco; their characters escape from their conduct and they are not entirely what they do.

But why we enjoy the idea of supreme wickedness in fiction, why we thrill when Satan cries, "Evil be thou my good," is another and a difficult question. Probably we are all rebels, at least in our dreams, against moral compulsion; and we like to give the Devil his due as the supreme rebel. We also have a sneaking worship of power; and it seems to us to be most purely power when it breaks all the Ten Commandments. We should not like that breakage in fact any more than we like bombs falling among us; but in fiction it gives us a pleasant holiday from virtue, like Swinburne's Dolores, who would not be suited to home life. Of course we don't really believe in these arch-villains any more than in Dolores; but we enjoy the excitement of a world in which their impossibility is by art made to seem possible.

## A LEAGUE OF LONGFELLOWS

The men of Kansas have started many crusades in their time, but never one more clearly above criticism than their latest effort, the League of Longfellows. It is no easy task to make the world not only safe for tall men, but comfortable as well; and it is being approached in

no light-hearted spirit. A French writer recently described with insight and sympathy the sorrows of the fat man, but the keener unhappiness of the tall, in the considered opinion of Kansas citizens, demands deeds and not words. So long as men walked, or rode astride the horse, tall men enjoyed a certain advantage as they went about the world. It is all the changes that are so grandly termed the growth of transport facilities that have made so sorry a change. The short man can squeeze in anywhere, and his one disability in fleeing from justice has been overcome by the motor-car. But the growth of public vehicles and public entertainments has made the world a bitter place for the tall. The seats everywhere are grotesquely inadequate; he lives in the embarrassed contemplation of unaccommodated knees; he finds the doorways dangerous and the berths and bunks impossible.

A modern democracy is carefully arranged so that minorities shall really suffer. Feeling that everything in America, except the stories, is made to fit the short or the middling man, the tall men of Kansas have banded themselves together lest they be standardized out of existence and crammed into inadequate graves. Theirs is a powerful case. An American millionaire recently presented his baby son with a sky-scraper to teach him high ideals. But of what use, cries Kansas, is it to admire height in buildings and to penalize it in men?

It is lonely on the heights. When the long fellows of America read their own chosen poet they know that the village blacksmith, being a mighty man, could not in fact look the whole world in the face without a painful bending of the neck or knees; they know only too well that the tear he wiped away in the church was not caused entirely by his daughter's singing, but was stimulated by the agonies of an inadequate pew. In the main, short opinion is favourable to the Longfellows' crusade. For it is no

secret that much of the public seating of the modern world is only suitable for children under twelve, and the tall men are fighting the battle of us all. They are the shock troops. The space they demand will give ordinary men a noble sense of amplitude, that rare feeling of being free to spread oneself that drives some men to purchase first-class tickets. And if they do not achieve a greater spaciousness for all, but only special divisions for the tall, it is no offence to say that their absence will be a blessing. The only fear is lest this political organization should run ahead too fast, and a new division supersede the worn-out traditional divisions of party politics. Many who would agree that political representation should be based upon the inch, are yet nervous about the possibility of a Tall Administration.

But at the moment the Longfellows have a stiff task before them. When we ask what it is that stands in the way of a world fit for tall fellows to live in, the answer is a familiar one—dividends. Cram and squash more people into your railways, buses, trams, cinemas, and everywhere else, and there is certainly a more rapid turnover and there are probably higher profits. The Longfellows say that such profits go either to short men, which is intolerable oppression, the wringing of money from the aches and twistings of men more nobly planned, or to tall men, who would prefer smaller profits and greater comfort. But they have to fight not only vested interests but the spirit of the time. All around them they hear the stock slogans of stock-size humans, that the more people are together the better they will be, that the world is a small place after all, and retort in kind that it is not the world but the people in it. They are told that there is plenty of room at the top, but they are not all top. It may be lonely on the heights, but they would prefer it to be rather more lonely farther down. The Longfellows

deserve some success, for even when, obedient to their poet, they strive to make their lives sublime, it is with the galling knowledge that their footsteps on the sands of time, being wider apart, are fewer than those that are made by the short.

## INITIALS

Rough calculations spread over several days show that of those who write letters more than half sign only the initials of their first, or Christian, names. It is a practice rather difficult to understand. Initials are colourless; they lack both definition and suggestion. This is so even with famous names. The name Milton defines the great poet, John Milton suggests also the secretary and the sectary. J. Milton might be anyone, and is, on the face of it, no one, a man as unknown to fame as W. Shakespeare. It is equally, though less strikingly, true of names not famous. The sensibility of Mr. Shandy is not needed to make an acquaintance seem a stranger until his name is known. All that he admits is, for instance, a C, but it may lead to trouble if he is treated as Charles when he may be Clement, Cuthbert, or Christopher, each of whom must be a subtly different person from the others.

Colour, distinction, and suggestion can, no doubt, be won for initials. Among any set of friends there is nearly always one whose personal quality is better hit off by his initials than by his name, and the use of them in addressing him implies friendship with a touch of banter in it. Initials, again, when steadily stuck to by persons of considerable ability, can acquire the force of names, as more than one successful modern writer has proved. But even where well-known men are in question, the initials are nearly always most forcible when the surname, too, is abbreviated

or dropped. W. E. G. means much more than W. E. Gladstone and something other than the statesman's full resounding name. Future ages may be excused for not knowing that W. G. was only two-thirds of another famous man's initials. And a single initial can acquire an almost necromantic force. A bare K, a large firm F (in green pencil) have set War Office and Admiralty thrilling to a sense of power which the full names could never have excited.

Many of those who sign their initials would probably plead economy in time, ink, and labour. The plea might seem stronger were it not that our Elizabethans, who certainly wrote their own and other people's names much less often than men of to-day must, evidently delighted in initials. It was not only when they were setting traps for future students with their "Mr. W. H." and so forth, that they would shrink so noble a name as Walter Ralegh into a mean W. R., or with a bald Fr. B. suggest not the essays and the *Novum Organum* but Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. It is perhaps worth noting, too, that the people who have been overburdened with names are not prone to take the easy course of signing one in full and leaving the rest in the custody of their bankers and the registrar of births. Therein, if they wish to mark their individuality, they are wise. If, by no choice of your own, you are, say, J. W. H. T., it is braver (no matter what jokes may be fitted to the proud array) to let the world know it than to be shy about it, as some very tall men are shy about their height.

No harsh censure is deserved by those who adopt an adroit arrangement. An ambitious young man has the name (if we may invent one for him) of Edward Wilson Baker. To write it Edward W. Baker is certainly to make it no more distinctive, and perhaps even to raise some doubt about his nationality. When it becomes E. Wilson

Baker it is very nearly a double surname, and the first initial might (who knows?) stand for Everard or Esme. But the use of bald initials only is nearly always to be traced to shyness. A prominent example was that of a very modest man, Dr. Jameson, who was always plain L. S. Jameson until his baronetcy forced into the open his remarkable names of Leander Starr. Others may be shy because they have one or more of those names which, for some reason not explained, carry a suggestion of the comical. And behind these, again, lies the great body of people who have nothing ridiculous in their names but whom a natural shrinking from self-revelation constrains to conceal them. This idea may be a little difficult to reconcile with the frequency with which some of them write to the newspapers; but something must always be allowed for the persistence into adult life of the old private-school notion that first names were soft and girlish things, to which a fellow need confess only in his family.

## THE FOWLER'S NET

The French Academy has authorized the use of the word "maximum." The Lord Chancellor and the Recorder of the City of London have exchanged views on the meaning of the word "sportsman." And Mr. H. W. Fowler has put out his fascinating, formidable book, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage.*

The care about language, of which these are but three of innumerable signs, makes one very self-conscious. (There now! is it right to use "one" like that—or as that?) One is back in one's (? his) schooldays—a small boy, standing up, with the eyes of the whole form upon him, bidden to answer a question, and sternly told to think before he speaks. And he must think not only of the

answer, but of the correct expression of it. Suppose he says (? say), "Neither Cæsar nor Pompey were" this or that, he will suffer for his grammar though his history may be faultless. The practised writer, who has formed the habit of leaving his infinitives unsplit and would never say or write, like Carlos in *The Duenna*: "Here are the dancers come to practise the fandango you intended to have honoured Donna Louisa with," finds himself nervously, or even terrifiedly (there again; what of those adverbs ending in -edly ?) approaching the apparently impossible task of saying the simplest thing without a mistake. The fowler's net is spread for him too, and its mesh is as fine as a mosquito curtain's (as that of a mosquito curtain). He is fascinated into inaction: a rabbit before a serpent. He loses his faith even in Molière; because he knows that, once M. Jourdain understood that: "le voix E se forme en rapprochant la mâchoire d'en bas de celle d'en haut," M. Jourdain would have been quite unable to say "E." He is like the centipede in the poem, which lost the power of walking as soon as the frog asked him which leg he moved first.

Grammar and style are not the only ditches where a frog or a fowler lurks. There is spelling. With the voice of a friend or of our own frailty he suddenly asks us how to spell "ecstasy." At ordinary moments we know perfectly well, from habit or instinct or eye, how to spell "ecstasy," and "parallel" and "accommodate" too; but the question, coming from within or without, makes even our Greek and Latin broken reeds. In many another of our daily activities consciousness lies in wait to pounce upon us and to make that suddenly difficult which was habitually easy. It often seizes a man who is going up stairs; he suddenly does not know whether it is his habit to look at each stair as he treads upon it, or at the stair above it, or straight in front of him. Many a man has

found himself gazing helplessly at his razor, suddenly ignorant of his regular way of holding the weapon; or plucking feebly at his tie, like Ophelia at her flowers, because he cannot think which way the knot is made. He cannot think; and the necessity of thinking is his trouble. When he does not think, he knows perfectly: the razor takes the right position in his hand, the tie knots itself. Consciousness pushes him back into the days when he was obliged to think, but allows him none of the pride with which he first used a razor and tied his own tie.

The obvious moral—that one must be careful to form good habits and to get one's technique as near perfect as may be—gives no help. The pianist who must think of his technique will make but poor music. The technique is there; but it cannot be got at. Perhaps we must search a little deeper. Setting aside the paralysis which makes it impossible to tie a tie, to play the piano, to spell a word, to write English, there are moods and moments known to all in which everything seems difficult and demands thought. And the knots that we tie, the sentences that we write, in those moods and moments are never so good as those which are done with what seems like greater ease. The temptation is to struggle for more and clearer thought, to squeeze from brain and limb yet more and more labour. The right course (supposing that we have done our best to acquire good technique) is not more labour, but less; it is to lean back in confidence on a power of which most of us know nothing except that it is there and ready to answer to any call upon it made in honest faith. Not only for golfers is "Don't press" a golden rule.

## "SUPER"

Mr. Shaw began with his superman; but he could not foresee that, because in a careless moment and in the attempt to translate Nietzsche he applied the prefix *super* to the word man, the same prefix would soon be applied to everything, or at least to everything that is advertised. The superman, luckily, does not exist; he is somebody in the future, somebody very unpleasant, no doubt, who, we may hope, will remain always in the future; but super-things, such as soap, cigarettes, chocolate, and what not, not only exist but seem to have exterminated everything that is not *super*. We ourselves remain much as we were before the superman was heard of, merely men, and very imperfect ones at that; it is only the things we make that are all different, at least in name. Being *super* they must all be superior to something or other, but to what is not quite clear; for the term *super*, as applied to things, is very like the term esquire as applied to men; it is put before everything as esquire is put after everybody, and by this universal use its meaning is weakened like the meaning of a certain epithet which has almost ceased to be abusive or even emphatic because some people can name nothing without it.

Since we now live in a world of super-things, we might expect them to be made by a race of supermen; but alas! though we have so quickly caught the habit of paying this compliment to all the things we make, we cannot pay it to ourselves. The nearest we get to it is in advertisements, for a tailor will, in a moment of enthusiasm, sometimes call himself a super-tailor; but no one yet, even in an advertisement, has proclaimed himself a superman.

The super-tailor gives himself that title because of the super-trousers he makes, not because of what he is in himself; he knows that in himself he is what he would be if his trousers were merely trousers and not *super*. We all know, indeed, that the world is much what it was before everything in it became *super*; if there is a difference, it is like the difference in income produced by doubling the supply of paper money. When that happens, the man who had a thousand a year before may have two thousand; but he can buy no more with it, for the purchasing power of the pound is halved. Or if we were all given peerages, we should find that the honour made no difference except in our manner of addressing each other; and so it is now with super-soap and cigarettes and all the other super-things; they are just like soap and cigarettes before they were ennobled.

In the past, when titles were too abundantly given they were given to human beings. In England we used to sneer at the multitude of foreign counts; but now we are quite used to the superfluity of super-things in our own country. Yet it is a novelty to give titles to things rather than to people, and like all novelties it has a meaning which is worth finding. We may guess that now we are more proud of the things we make than of ourselves who make them, for when we compare our own with any past age, it is always things we boast of and not men. We do not say that any poet of our time is a super-Shakespeare, but we do flatter ourselves that Shakespeare, or even Leonardo da Vinci, would wonder at our aeroplanes if they could see one.

There have been ages in which men were as artlessly proud of themselves as we are of the things we make; you can see this pride in the portraits and medals and tombs of the Renaissance. The Renaissance prince had a notion of a magnificent kind of life, and he believed that

pride in himself was a necessary part of it; he peacocked about the world, and, if the word had been invented, would have had himself sculptured as the superman. Cæsar Borgia, indeed, tried to be a superman, though he had never heard the word; but we, even the most successful of us, are content to be dowdy in ourselves and to boast only of our super-products. The richest of us are only super-millionaires, not super-men; Mr. Rockefeller made no attempt to flower magnificently in his dress or demeanour; apart from his income he was just like anyone else of his class and country. The Kaiser, even, was a super-war lord because of his army, not a superman because of himself; his uniforms were magnificent, but with an official, not a personal, magnificence. Out of uniform he, too, dressed like anyone else; but a Renaissance prince expressed himself, his own pride and super-humanity, in his clothes. No one now, except a few undergraduates, tries to live magnificently as a lord of creation, to walk like a superman down the street.

Whether or not this change is for the better, it is certainly for the duller. Super-things are not so amusing as Renaissance princes, or even as the dandies of the Regency; indeed, they are not amusing at all. They might be, if by *super* we meant more beautiful, but in fact we mean nothing at all by it. In France, in the thirteenth century there was an ambition to build super-cathedrals, each one surpassing the last in size and height and splendour; and the rivalry went on until it culminated in Beauvais, that last impossibility which fell in as soon as the choir was roofed. But Beauvais, patched and propped up as it is, remains a wonder of the world, a monument of the inordinate dreams of man; and it is most beautiful, whereas super-soap is not more beautiful than soap; it is, indeed, merely soap with a prefix; under any other name it would smell as sweet and wash as clean. In fact,

if we must have such prefixes, and we used to get on quite well without them, it is time that we found a new one. For *super* is worn out with over-use; it has become so common that, like the noise of modern super-music, it produces no effect at all.

## DE LUXE

Lately we had something to say against the prefix "super"; but it, at least, being philosophic in origin, has seen better days. The phrase *de luxe* has not; it always has suggested, as it now suggests, fleshpots, people whose eyes swell with fatness, profiteers, palm lounges, and loungers. Yet it is more useful and more expressive than "super," for it does mean something, something which many people are pleased to call civilization and which seems to them the flower or crown of all the arts and sciences. For this did Watt watch the kettle boiling and Newton the apple falling; for this did Darwin brood over earthworms and orchids; for this did the great painters and musicians of the past, Raphael, Beethoven, and the rest, triumphantly express their immortal souls. In this the labours of all the ages find their consummation and reward. At last there are some people, and not so very few, who can live and move and have their being in a world *de luxe*.

The phrase means something other than luxury; one would not say that Alexander Borgia, even, made of the Vatican a palace *de luxe*; it belongs to hotels rather than to palaces, to Pullman cars rather than to the most magnificent coach and six; to fur coats more than to brocades; in fact, to all the things that one can get simply by paying highly for them and that are advertised in the best advertisements. There is a whole world *de luxe* and no difficulty in entering it, no introduction required, no wit or birth or

accomplishment, nothing but the power of drawing cheques and having them honoured. Those who live and move in Pullman cars in this world get satisfaction from the thought that they are doing everything *de luxe* more than from any active or direct sensation of pleasure. Often indeed things in the *de luxe* world are quite bad—you can get a five-shilling dinner in it for £2 10*s.*; but there are always palms and mirrors and ladies taking off expensive cloaks in front of them, and gentlemen with just those trousers and hats and cigarettes you see in the tailors' advertisements, waiters to be tipped, and music that makes up in quantity for its quality. Above all, there is always music, except, by a strange oversight, in the Pullman car; the inhabitants of the *de luxe* world can do nothing without it, they would lose even their appetites if they did not eat to that accompaniment.

Why that is so, when they seem to care nothing for music in itself nor to know one piece from another, is hard to say. It may be that they are not good at talking, or that they mitigate each other's conversation with that incessant yearning or clattering noise. But probably the simple truth is that they associate music with *luxe*; it is one of the things they pay for, and they would think they were not getting their money's worth, however good the dinner, if it were not accompanied with those excruciating sounds. Anyhow, the music is the *amari aliquid* that surges *medio de fonte leporum*, and, if you are not of the world *de luxe*, you would give anything to the jaded players to stop it. But those who are of that world have nerves, or ears, of iron; they may be as fastidious about wines or cigars as the legendary princess who felt the pea under all those mattresses; they may take the same pride in their fastidiousness as an artist in his art, but they never complain of the music, or indeed of all the other prevailing uglinesses of the world *de luxe*.

However good they may be at tasting, eyes they have and see not, and ears and hear not. The *de luxe* world means to them just glitter and clatter and with that they are content. In this age, because we can standardize our machinery, our greatest achievement, we try to standardize everything; and the *de luxe* world comes of an effort to standardize the life of pleasure. Put a penny, or rather a hundred pounds, in the slot, and this machine-made, standardized *luxe* will come out. But it is like a process-reproduction of pleasure rather than pleasure itself; and, if you would live a life of pleasure, you must do something more than pay for it. This *de luxe* world is imitative always, except in its mechanical contrivances, of past ages in which people spent brains as well as money on their diversions. It is Renaissance or Rococo in a confused parasitic way; it remembers dimly Roman splendours and the Grand Monarque, and Watteau and Fragonard; but, unlike the revellers and artists of the past, it sees no difference between good and bad, but only a difference between prices.

The true life of pleasure is active; but those who live in the world *de luxe* are always passive, except perhaps when they shoot pigeons; they are always being carried from one place to another, or supplied with food or music or clothes; and these they do not choose but remain subject to the one predominant suggestion that they are living a life of pleasure because they pay high prices. For the real life of pleasure you must be educated; you must be able to talk and listen, knowing the difference between good and bad, both in talk and in music. And, if you know this, you will know also that excellence is rare and only to be got with effort. But the great error and pretence of the *de luxe* world is that it professes to provide excellence in profusion; to standardize it; to run up palaces, all according to a pattern, in a month; to furnish

thousands of musicians, millions of statues and pictures, and diversions of all kinds.

But it cannot be done; excellence, even in cookery and clothes, remains rare and must be encouraged by discernment, which is also rare. Where it is lacking, the wise man of pleasure prefers a plain article, that confesses its mediocrity, to the imitation of excellence; he prefers structure to ornament, and a chop to a bad vol-au-vent called after the financier's wife. But the *de luxe* world is all ornament, machine-made and lavished to conceal its mediocrity; it is all a kind of hypnotism exercised to persuade its inhabitants that they are living a life of pleasure like Heliogabalus or any other notorious voluptuary of the past. But these voluptuaries were few, and the inhabitants of the *de luxe* world are many; they think they are living a life of pleasure, but they are not; the wages of sin are death, but the wages of the *de luxe* world are dullness as deep as that which broods over any other kind of mediocrity.

## THE BEAUTY OF "PERHAPS"

Lord Morley said in his old age that "Perhaps" was a great word, and that we are reading Montaigne still because of his liking for such words of caution as "Perhaps," and "Probably," and "It may be." Yet too many of them irritate us in a writer or a speaker; they may be a bad habit born of the timidity that comes of ignorance, like the use of the word "somewhat" by those who are afraid to say anything decisive. To fall back on these qualifications because you fear that some one will prove you wrong if you say the thing outright is mere hedging, a trick of hesitation that injures style without improving thought.

But we may be sure that Lord Morley did not mean to

praise this kind of "perhaps," and did not find it in Montaigne. There is a "Perhaps" that comes not of vagueness, but of the desire for greater precision, as there is a scepticism that comes not of unfaith, but of faith. There are those to whom every subject, and indeed the whole universe, is so empty of content that they come easily to conclusions about it all; and there are those to whom it is all so rich that every general statement seems to them dangerously inadequate, or at best only useful for practical purposes. It was the "Perhaps" of these that Lord Morley admired, and, as a practical statesman, he must have admired it in action as well as in thought. The men who do most harm in the world, who most frustrate and discourage the highest hopes of mankind, are the Robespierres, whose narrow certainty reduces the greatest ideas to an absurdity, who will not revise an opinion lest their minds should fall back into chaos, and who care more for their own consistency than for the lives of men. To them the loftiness of their motives is enough; they never consider results; they never suspect that they may have unconscious motives much less lofty than those of which they are conscious.

But the profoundest philosophy, the best theology even, comes from those who do not cry "What is truth?" like jesting Pilate, from a disbelief in its very existence, but who distrust their own power of grasping it all because of its beauty and richness. They are like the greatest artists, whose subtlety comes of the fact that they know they can draw only a tenth of what is there. The thrill of life is in the passionate humility of their choice; and so it is with thought also. The most "God-intoxicated" men are the least satisfied with theological formulas, and would write "Perhaps" all down the Athanasian Creed. It is not God they doubt, but the human tendency to simplify reality out of the greatest things for purposes

of thought. Yet in their "Perhaps" there is no despair; they see the value of all thought, of all conviction, so long as the thinker does not believe that his thought is a complete equivalent to the reality or that his conviction is free from the imperfections of his own nature. For the more we learn about the human mind the more we become aware that all ideas are perverted by its peculiarities; and the thinker must constantly allow for this perversion in himself, must whisper to himself "Perhaps" when he is most pleased with the neatness of a formula. Reality, he must be sure, is better than any version of it, and he must be thankful that any truth of his is not the whole truth.

## THE SCHOLAR

The Poet Laureate once said that, "as Spenser is the poet's poet, so is Bradley the scholar's scholar"; yet Henry Bradley was not favoured by circumstances, never had a regular academic training, and fell into his place on the New English Dictionary almost by accident. He was, in fact, born, not made, a scholar, or rather, because he was a born scholar, he made himself one. There he differed from many scholars who are painfully made and who betray the painfulness of the process by their extreme pride in the result, like those newly-rich who can think of nothing but the money which they have acquired at the sacrifice of everything else.

There are two kinds of scholar—the narrow and the broad, the small and the large, and he was the large kind. The small is the scholar by exclusion; he prides himself on knowing something thoroughly; but he achieves this thoroughness by knowing nothing else. He is called a learned man, the word being curiously used only of certain

kinds of knowledge; but outside that he is proudly and obstinately ignorant. He is also contemptuous of all who do not share his particular kind of learning, not seeing that to acquire it by the process of exclusion is not difficult and requires no great intellectual powers. There are many mediocre people who can do one thing very well because they spend their lives in doing it. No one can drill like a drill sergeant, or write like a writing master; but their skill is taken for granted, even by themselves. The narrow scholar does not take his particular kind of learning, or his more general ignorance, for granted; both are a source of pride to him, for "what he knows not is not knowledge"; and this narrow pride is the disease of his trade, differing from other trade diseases only in the fact that to him it is no disease, but the very essence of scholarship.

The great scholar like Henry Bradley is free from it —perhaps he escaped it the more easily because he had not the ordinary academic training and was not accustomed to think of himself from youth as one of the learned class. It was interest in his subject that made him a scholar, and it did not exclude interest in other subjects. For the great scholar sees his subject always in relation to other subjects. He is, and must be, a man of great intellectual powers, specialized only so that he may know his own subject thoroughly and because he is more interested in that than in anything else; and he is always surprising others by his knowledge as the narrow scholar surprises them by his ignorance. Gibbon was a scholar of this large magnificent kind, who also lacked the regular academic training; and it may be that the university scholars who attacked the fifteenth chapter of the *Decline and Fall* in detail thought, therefore, that they would have an easy victory. But on these rash and unfortunate men Gibbon opened the floodgates of his learning so that they were mere wreckage whirled away in the torrent of it. He

had lived among the books into which they dipped for the purpose of controversy; yet he had not lived for those books alone. On them and on all subjects he exercised the judgment of a great mind; and knowledge to him was something to be used, not hoarded; he was accurate, not from a narrow pride in accuracy, but because precision is a part of knowledge itself. If you know a thing wrongly you do not know it.

Yet there is a larger and a smaller kind of accuracy; and the great scholar cares most for the larger kind. If he is to slip—and all men slip sometimes—he would rather slip on a small point than on a large one; and this attention to great things gives him the judgment which the small scholar, intent upon little ones, usually lacks. To know your subject fully you must have a sense of proportion in the details of it, like the great artist who paints a scene and not all its photographic detail. Yet the great artist knows the scene better, and can draw it better, than the industrious drudge, because it is only one scene of many that he has observed for the purpose of his art, and because that purpose controls all his observations. So the great scholar knows far more and knows it to better purpose than the narrow one, because he knows what knowledge is and is accustomed to use it for great purposes. Having more than one talent, he does not hide his talents in a napkin and pride himself on their disuse, but, using them, he preserves his humility and increases his power.

## ISAAC NEWTON

"*Omne immensum peragravit mente animoque.*" Two hundred years, more fruitful than any before in increased knowledge of the universe, have passed since the grave closed over Newton in Westminster Abbey, but all they

have brought has confirmed the certainty of his achievement and the splendour of his fame. All the world confesses them; all the greatest of his successors with one accord have done them homage. Before his day men had discerned a Divine order in all things and had attempted to discover the laws of its operation in the movements of the planets. Newton gave them rigid demonstration for surmise more or less happy. He enlarged the bounds of science and the whole domain of thought by proving that one of these laws rules from the centre of the earth to the uttermost depths of the heavens within the ken of man. The years have taught us that these depths are unspeakably more profound than men judged them to be in the seventeenth century, and they have taught us to suppose that beyond them there exists an infinite immensity of space. But to the remotest limits which observation has penetrated, or which calculation has attained, the Newtonian law of universal gravity rigidly applies.

Of Newton's other discoveries in pure and applied mathematics, of "fluxions," as he termed the differential calculus, of the composition of light, of the motions of the moon, this is not the place to speak. They are too abstruse and too technical for discussion outside the pages of scientific publications, but all exhibit the same qualities of brilliant imagination, patience, and caution on the part of the discoverer. He was not indifferent to fame—the vehemence, not to say the acrimony, with which he vindicated his claims to priority of invention against Hooke, Leibniz, and others, shows that he prized it. Yet he nearly decided to suppress the Third Book of the *Principia*; he did not publish his account of the differential calculus for twenty-six years after he had first used it, and he threw aside and lost the calculation which established his supreme discovery. There is actually doubt whether

he would ever have made it public if Halley (of Halley's comet) had not gone down to Cambridge and induced him to repeat it.

Newton was a student and much of a recluse, but he did not shrink from public service. When Cambridge protested against James II's command to admit a Benedictine monk to a degree without taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, as at Oxford a little later the Fellows of Magdalen were to protest against his efforts to force a Roman Catholic President upon them, Newton was one of the delegates of his University to appear before Jeffreys and the Court of High Commission. He represented Cambridge in the Convention Parliament and again in the Parliament of 1701. He and his friends, Halley and John Locke, were Montagu's advisers on the re-coinage of 1695–96, and at the Mint he not only refused a bribe of £6,000 from "a great Dutchesse," but as Warden, and afterwards as Master, he effected much-needed reforms.

But it is round the Royal Society and his friends who were members that his social connexions chiefly gathered. Controversies which arose over his papers on light so disgusted him that more than once he declared his intention to "bid adieu to philosophy eternally," except what "I do for my own satisfaction, or leave to come out after me. She is such an impertinently litigious lady that a man had as good be engaged in lawsuits as have to do with her." But in the very year in which he wrote this, the Royal Society ordered that the *Principia* be printed forthwith "in a fair letter." "Imprimatur S. Pepys, Reg. Soc. Præses, Julii 5, 1686," runs the official licence. "S. Pepys Præses" may not have understood the work, as he confesses that he did not understand the answer to that problem of chances he submitted to Newton about "the groom porter's lottery," whereof Mr. Smith was concerned "more than in jĕst" to compass a solution. Per-

haps Mr. Pepys was so concerned, too, but he certainly took a warm and kindly interest in Newton's welfare. Halley, who, with his usual generosity, had defrayed the cost of publication, wrote that he would "send presentation copies to the Royal Society, Mr. Boyle, Mr. Paget, Mr. Flamsteed, and if there be any else in town that you desire to gratify in that way." It is recorded that the price of this immortal volume was fixed for London at nine shillings "in calves' leather and lettered."

Newton seems to have made the acquaintance of Locke in 1689 when he was attending Parliament, probably at one of the weekly parties "for the purpose of conversation and discussion" given by Lord Pembroke to whom Locke dedicated the next year the famous *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. "A lover of stone dolls," said Newton of the virtuoso of Wilton and his statuary. We hear again how eight years later "a small group of friends were in the habit of meeting once or twice a week; John Evelyn, Sir Christopher Wren, John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Bentley," at the lodgings in St. James's Palace which Bentley occupied as keeper of the Royal libraries. Ladies were among Newton's acquaintance; the clever Princess of Wales, "cette diablesse, madame la Princesse," as her Royal father-in-law called the correspondent of Leibniz; through Locke he became a friend of Damaris, Lady Masham and her daughter, and he sends messages to Lady Monmouth. But the draft proposal to the rich and childless widow, Lady Norris, found among his papers, if it be really his, shows a ludicrous insensibility to the mind and feelings of women. With the delightful trivial things of Mr. Spectator's meditations, or of the fair Belinda's world of pretty vanities, he has no part; though once he does ask his handsome step-niece how the smallpox has left her face.

When Newton died, Pope, whose thought is deeply

coloured by the Newtonian philosophy, wished for "some memoirs and character of him as a private man." Singularly little in that kind has come down to us. His lively and charming step-niece, Catherine Barton, whom Swift loved "better than anybody" in London, was ready enough to gossip with the Dean, but their conversation does not seem ever to have turned upon her famous uncle.

Newton would not have been a child of the seventeenth century if he had not been deeply interested in theological speculations. But, largely under the influence of his method and his discoveries, the world has travelled far since he busied himself with the "mystical fancies" he discussed with Locke. His interpretation of prophecies occupies it no more than his laborious attempts to fix the date of the expedition of the Argonauts, his investigations in search of "the philosopher's tincture," or his interest in the art of "multiplying gold"—an interest he shared with Locke and Boyle. In his letters to Bentley he rises to larger and more enduring themes, for in them he develops at length the argument that the nature and the motions of the planets are conclusive evidence of design. This argument, he states, he had in mind in the Third Book of the *Principia*. His attitude towards "the eternal, the infinite, and perfect Being" and the works which display "the Maker's high magnificence" is that of boundless, but serene and passionless, wonder. There is no sign that the problems which tore the soul of Pascal a little earlier at any time disturbed him.

It has indeed been suggested, perhaps with a measure of truth, that his presentment of the universe as a system of mechanics, governed by the same laws as the trivial circumstances of everyday life, tended to foster the complacent scepticism which largely prevailed in enlightened society throughout Europe until the French Revolution. Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, and Condillac admired it and adapted it to their own views. Laplace,

who declared that the *Principia* would always be assured "a pre-eminence above all the other productions of the human intellect," told Napoleon that he had not mentioned a Creator in his *Mécanique Céleste*, because "he did not need that hypothesis." "Ah!" answered Napoleon, "it is a fine hypothesis; it explains many things." Newton agreed, if numbers of his disciples did not.

Like all real thinkers, he was overwhelmed by the immensity of knowledge and by the littleness of his own incomparable achievements. In a stately compliment to Hooke and Descartes he finely wrote: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." But he knew that neither he nor the giants saw far into "the great sea of being." "To myself," he said at the end of his long life, "I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." "Humanum genus ingenio superavit," the inscription on his statue declares in the chapel of the great college whose chief glory is in his fame. But here is his own judgment of his life work, and of the incomprehensible infinite that surrounds us. New truths unfold themselves with the years; grander and ampler principles are revealed; but after each discovery the great ocean still stretches out, illimitable in its immensities, until it seems to mingle with the heavens.

## SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

"*The monument of power and mighty zeal in our ancestors.*" (*Sir Christopher Wren on Old St. Paul's.*)

When discoveries are being daily announced which lead us to look back for tens of centuries, it is difficult to realize

that but two hundred years have passed since Sir Christopher Wren was buried in the Cathedral he had built. He was born two years before Milton wrote *Comus* and while Ben Jonson was yet alive; when he died, George I had been nine years on the Throne and Henry Fielding was a youth of sixteen. The Rebellion, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, the Revolution, and the accession of the House of Hanover were among the events through which he lived. The English of his youth was the English of the *Areopagitica* and of Jeremy Taylor; he saw it become the English of the *Spectator* and of Swift. In his own art he effected a very great revolution.

At the age of thirty-four the Fire of London gave him the greatest opportunity ever offered to architect. He was appointed to be "Surveyor-General and Principal Architect for rebuilding the whole city." Within four days after the fire had burnt itself out he was ready with a sketch-plan for a new city. The design was magnificent, but London could not wait. Her citizens set to work rebuilding their shops and houses on the old sites, and the "Surveyor-General" had to confine himself to the second office conferred by his appointment, the rebuilding "the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, all the parochial churches . . . with other public structures."

The energy and the fertility of the man are amazing. He does not seem to have concerned himself with architecture until some three years before he undertook this tremendous commission, his first studies having been given to mathematics, natural science, anatomy, and medicine. But between 1670 and 1675 he had finished five or six of the fifty-two City churches built to his plans, he was ready with his "favourite design" for St. Paul's in 1673, and with the design actually sanctioned a couple of years later. The great library of Trinity College, Cambridge, the noblest of all his works after St. Paul's, was begun in

1677, and the Monument and Temple Bar somewhat later. But it is impossible to mention the many works to which he set his indefatigable hand. The thirty-six Livery halls for the London Companies, the fine blocks at Greenwich, worthy to stand beside the creation of Inigo Jones, Morden College, Chelsea Hospital, and Hampton Court, must not detain us from St. Paul's.

Like his mighty predecessor, Bramante, and other illustrious masters of the Italian Renaissance, Wren aspired to build his church as a Greek cross. The Pantheon early cast its spell over the artists who revived the admiration for Roman forms after centuries when columns and friezes had been torn from temples and thermæ, theatres and palaces, to be mutilated for the adornment of Christian churches, to be built into the walls of robber fortresses, or to be burnt into lime. The Greek cross, with a mighty dome over it, became their ideal.

Tradition foiled them in Rome as it did in London. Bramante would have stopped at nothing. He begged the Pope to allow him to dig up the tomb of St. Peter on grounds of art. That was too much, even for Julius II, but the *Grotte Vaticane* bear dismal witness to the havoc he suffered his reckless architect to work. In St. Peter's, the Latin cross—itself a development from the secular basilica of Imperial Rome—was maintained, and the area covered by Bramante's immense design was reduced by a third. Inigo Jones, the forerunner of Wren in bringing the classical revival to England, had studied in Italy the work of the ancients and the work of the later disciples of the classical school. Wren never travelled to Italy, but he went to Paris for six months during the Plague, where he saw Bernini's design of the Louvre, for which "he would have given his skin," where in the works for the new Palace, "for a while my daily object," he found "a school of architecture probably the best in Europe," and where,

too, he may have learned something from the French classicism of Perrault, Mansard, and others.

"Lector si monumentum requiris circumspice." Words juster and more apt no tomb has ever borne. The great church hands down for all time the genius of him who built it. Criticism may be made of this feature or of that; but one glance at the dome, one glance at the interlocking arches of the crossing beneath it—a vista recalling in its magic the columns of Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito—bears out this proud tribute of filial love. The dome by the Tiber, the dome of Michael Angelo, alone excels the dome by the Thames. The third great dome of the world—that of Justinian's church by the Bosporus—may challenge both with its internal grace and splendour and its subtle suggestion of soaring lightness; but outside it is flat and tame. "They dreamt not of a perishable home, Who thus could build." Wren, like the awful Florentine, was a man of deep and simple faith. "If I glory," the old man wrote, when he had fallen on evil tongues and was about to be dismissed from his post as Surveyor: "If I glory, it is in the singular mercy of God, who has enabled me to begin and finish my great work, so conformable to the ancient model."

None of the Renaissance work is so conformable as was supposed to the ancient model—even to the Imperial Roman model, itself an imitation of the Hellenistic style of Pergamum, Antioch, and Alexandria—but Inigo Jones and Wren did grasp and "religiously endeavour to follow" the chief principles which guided that model. An unfailing feeling for proportion—the cardinal principle of all good art—inspires them. It raises the simplest of Wren's work to the level of a masterpiece. He is sparing of ornament—though he could use it well, as some of the work on St. Paul's shows—and at times his outlines are cold in their austerity. He was sorely hampered by the poverty

of many parishes after the Fire, but he produced wonderful effects with poor material by his masterly command of light and shade. Since he had the opportunity of building at the same time so many churches within sight of each other, this "urbis conditor," as the same epitaph speaks of him, planned them as parts of a whole, designing towers and steeples in harmonies and in contrasts which the church-breakers and the "sky-scrapers" have but lately marred.

But the Cathedral and the dome, loved of all Londoners, and to which some of us who work almost beneath its shadow, are bounden by a more than common "pietas," the City churches, the City halls, the stately houses built by Wren, and all the introduction of Renaissance and Palladian classicism into England are but part of a general European movement much larger and more profound. Von Ranke noted, in the first half of the last century, how the later work about St. Peter's, belonging to the reigns of Sixtus V and Paul V, reflects not merely the artistic sense, but also the thought of a new time. The too successful attempts of Palladio and of Vignoll to reduce to rigid rule proportions which Wren saw to be "in their own nature but the modes and fashions of those ages wherein they were used," strangled the happy spontaneity of the early Renaissance. Regularity, order, and a majestic but too massive splendour became the chief ends of design, and the preference for these qualities spread from Italy to other lands.

It is dangerous to press such speculations far, but there does seem to be a certain kindred between the spirit of the counter-Reformation as of absolute monarchy and the spirit of the Palladian classicism. Men were weary of controversy and sought solace in the clear, the harmonious, and the positive in art, as the Latin races sought it in the stricter dogma and discipline that had followed Trent

and in the internal tranquillity and orderliness of the unfettered kingship created by Richelieu. They sought it in all civilized countries from another source, from "what hath been called the New Philosophy . . . which, from the times of Galileo at Florence and Sir Francis Bacon in England, hath been much cultivated in Italy, France, Germany, and other parts abroad, as well as in England." Wren was early a member of the "association of worthy persons" which became the Royal Society after the Restoration, and he was President of that illustrious body when Boyle—whose *Hydrostatickes* Mr. Pepys found "of infinite delight"—and Flamsteed and Halley and the sublime intellect of Isaac Newton adorned its ranks. Newton speaks in the *Principia* of "Dr. Christopher Wren, Knight," as one of the three leading geometers of the age, "beyond comparison"—a testimony which is itself a certificate of immortality.

But the great artist knew, as certainly as did the son who wrote his epitaph, where was his assured title to the admiration of the world and to the love and gratitude of his country while the name of England and of London shall endure amongst men. In the last period of his long life, once a year it was his custom to drive to St. Paul's and to sit for a space under the dome that he had built. On February 25, 1723, he sat there for the last time. He drove back to his house at Hampton Court, but the cold, or the exertion, was too much for his outworn frame. He fell asleep in his chair, and was found dead by his servant. He sleeps in the crypt. Beside him rests Joshua Reynolds, born in the year in which Christopher Wren died.

# GEORGE CANNING

It is a hundred years since George Canning died in the fullness of his powers and of his fame. Few English statesmen have had a career so astonishing. A penniless orphan in infancy, the dependent of an uncle in childhood and in early life, the fame of his abilities at Eton and Christ Church and the friendships he formed there opened to him in his first manhood the avenue to greatness. At four and twenty he was member for a nomination borough as a follower of Pitt. Two years later he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and on Pitt's retirement to make way for Addington he was joint Paymaster-General. At thirty-seven he was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Portland Administration. The bombardment of Copenhagen and the seizure of the Danish fleet marked his entry on the great stage of European politics. He had learned the purport of the secret articles of Tilsit by which Alexander and Napoleon had agreed to force Denmark to join them against England. He struck at once, and the blow completely defeated Napoleon's immense projects for the time. The author of "The Needy Knife-grinder" and of the squib on Jean Bon Saint-André had finished the work of Pitt and Nelson, and shown that the "light, jesting, paragraph-writing man," as his opponents represented him to be, had the courage and the insight to take a great decision and to act upon it.

Canning's irrepressible love of fun stamped him as a trifler with solemn mediocrities. It was all very well to send the famous ciphered dispatch, "separate, secret and confidential," which consisted of the witty verses on the Dutch, to an intimate friend like Bagot, or to meet this

Ambassador's plea that his dispatches were short, because his dinner always interrupted him, by suggesting that "you might evade the force of that not unexpected impediment by beginning to write at a time of day when it does not usually present itself"; but the temperament from which such effusions flowed was misunderstood by men used to the ponderous decorum of Castlereagh. Two years after Canning had snatched the Danish fleet from the reach of Napoleon came the quarrel and the duel with Castlereagh which banished the brilliant statesman from office and broke his career.

For thirteen years covering the rest of the Napoleonic Wars, the first and second Bourbon Restorations, the Congress of Vienna, the conclusion of the Holy Alliance and its first developments and consequences, Canning was to hold no principal office. The Foreign Secretary of 1807 was glad to accept the Board of Control in 1816, and was a splendid exile in India in 1822 when Liverpool and Wellington compelled the King to recall him to the Foreign Office. His own temper, his "eager desire to scramble to the highest point," was responsible for the prolonged eclipse which overshadowed the best years of his life. On the formation of the Cabinet of 1812 under his old Christ Church friend, Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister and Castlereagh made him what he acknowledged to be "perhaps the handsomest offer ever made to an individual." Castlereagh was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the House of Commons. He was ready to hand over the Foreign Office to his rival. Canning refused, unless he was also to have the leadership of the House. He saw his mistake when it was too late. Two years of the Foreign Office at that time, he said, would have been worth twelve years of life. They might certainly have changed the course of history.

By accepting in 1814 the Embassy Extraordinary to

Lisbon, at £14,000 a year, he deepened the general prejudice against him. Except by his personal friends, who were devoted to him, he was not trusted. "Nobody will believe that he can take his tea without a stratagem"; he "would rather have obtained his end by a crooked path than a straight one"; he "can never be a gentleman for more than three hours at a time"—these are the kind of things his enemies said of him. Friends complain of "the dangerous habit of quizzing which he cannot restrain"; and remark that he hardly ever made a considerable speech without making an enemy for life.

Yet this man, "whose lash," said Wilberforce, "would have fetched the hide off a rhinoceros," himself writhed beneath criticism and angrily resented opposition in the Cabinet. He "considered himself an Irishman," he wrote to Sir Walter Scott, and an Irishman he was in many of his weaknesses as in many of his gifts. He was nervous and highly strung. He often hesitated and blushed when speaking in the House. He burst into tears when Addington offered him his friendship, and when his friends congratulated him on his defence for accepting the Lisbon Embassy. He wept when listening to a sermon by Chalmers. Perhaps the most intimate and the most attractive revelation of one side of his character is the account which the cultivated French diplomatist de Marcellus—who secured the Venus of Milo for France—gives of a visit he paid the Foreign Secretary during the height of the "non-intervention" controversy about Spain. He found Canning reading Virgil under the trees at Gloucester Lodge. He was pondering the well-known lines about the welfare of the bees, the

> Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
> Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.

"It must all end then in this little dust," said Canning.

"I shall attempt nothing of that which an inward and solemn voice appears to dictate. . . . Literature is a consolation, a hope, a place of rest for me. . . . Yet still the desire of fame, which cannot at my age be called ambition, drives me back to public affairs." And then he ended, "I must go to encounter Brougham in the Commons." The desire of fame drove him on to the very end. The death of Castlereagh placed the highest prize within his grasp. On April 10, 1827, the "son of an actress," as Lord Grey called him, was Prime Minister, with an authority not inferior to Chatham's. On August 8 he was dead.

To describe Canning's policy from his return to the Foreign Office in 1822 until his death would be to write the history of the chief events and movements of those years in the Old World and in the New. To name a few and to indicate the general tendencies of what was called his "system" is all that can be attempted here. So late as 1823 Canning said that "Burke is still the manual of my politics," but the manual went through a good many modifications and revisions from which Burke would have recoiled. Canning, as a disciple of Pitt, favoured Parliamentary reform; but he rejected as decidedly as did Burke the supremacy of numbers "told by the head." He was for preserving the balance of the Constitution between King, Lords, and Commons, and for keeping the representation of different interests by a highly diversified franchise. Strongly holding enlightened and liberal views on such burning questions as Catholic Emancipation and the slave trade, he was resolute in the support of law and order even when law and order were enforced by the "Six Acts." Yet his firm resistance to democracy left the popularity of his later years undimmed, while a like resistance exposed Castlereagh to calumny, danger, and outrage.

His victory over "the Cottage" coterie, and in the end

over the King, was won by the same weapon with which he overawed the despotic sovereigns and statesmen of the Continent. "I saw him," says the same French observer, vanquish the "King, the Ministers, and the aristocracy and place himself at the helm of State." He threatened publicity; he employed it at times with a freedom which shocked and alarmed the Duke of Wellington and all the old school of diplomatists.

That was perhaps his most fundamental innovation on the foreign policy of his great predecessor. Castlereagh saw before he died that England could not remain a partner in an alliance with Continental Governments which aimed at the suppression, by arms, if they thought fit, of the popular movements which began to break out over Europe shortly after the war. Canning trod in his footsteps, in developing and applying this view. He did much to foster in the world the idea of nationality for which the Revolution and Napoleon had prepared the way and which his own disciple Palmerston adopted with less reserve. His admiration of British institutions as he conceived them was so high that he thought Continental Liberals had only to adopt them in order to ensure the moral and material welfare of their countrymen. He would not "forbid them from kindling their torches at the flame of British freedom." He did not see, as George IV did see, that "every land has not the same fruits above, or minerals below, the surface," and that institutions good for us might not be good for others.

His death, said Metternich, was "an immense event, for the man was a whole revolution in himself." Probably he did not himself realize how great was the revolution of which he was the sign, and in part the parent. Abroad it meant the renunciation of the old "European" attitude of the war, which Castlereagh and Wellington had long continued to observe. At home it wrought the dissolution

of the old Tory party. From the Treasury bench, where he sat as Prime Minister beside Brougham and Sir Francis Burdett, he proclaimed that he would oppose Parliamentary reform "to the end of my life." Five years later Lord Grey, his Whig enemy, forced it upon the Crown and the aristocracy by the might of the popular feeling which Canning had evoked and fostered as the mainstay of his power. With him or without him the change must have come; but with him it would hardly have made so sudden and so wide a breach in the "balanced" institutions be admired and revered.

## THE CHARM OF LONDON

Misguided persons are to be met who will maintain that London is dull and depressing, and that they need frequent changes from its monotony. Their frame of mind is surely the Hegelian night, in which all cows are black. For, above all cities, London offers to those that have eyes to see and ears to hear a free gift of strange contrasts and illuminating collocations. Her choicest sights and sounds she hides from the wise and prudent, who shorten space and lengthen time by the use of motor-cars, and reveals to the babes of locomotion who go on foot or by omnibus or Underground. To these London is a giant lucky-bag; man going forth to his labour until the evening, never knows what he may draw from it before the day is over.

Where else may you hope to see a millionaire merchant or a gaitered Bishop swaying from a strap in time to the sudden sinuosities of a Tube? If you are in luck, you may flush a peer of the realm taking a twopenny ticket in an omnibus. Another omnibus may afford the instructive spectacle of an eminent limb of the law attempting a premature boarding, and heavily defeated in the ensuing

encounter with the uniformed marshal of the waiting queue. The eyes of dramatic Justice twinkle beneath their bandage at the thought. In a spacious avenue you may pass a world-famous statesman smiling gently at his own thoughts, and within five minutes see in Downing Street a, if not perhaps the, "gentleman with a duster," whose thoughts make other people smile ungently. Hard by, beneath the shadow of an office consecrated to the affairs of the gorgeous East, appropriately exotic water-fowl, of nightmare aspect, scoop up fallen twigs and leaves with bills like steam-shovels, and thoughtfully regurgitate the proceeds as unprofitable. Within the same park-railings classes of school-children scattered about the grass imbibe mental nutriment, one hopes more permanently. The vagrant who spent last night beneath the stars sits to-day on a free seat in the sun, listening to band music as good as any England can supply. Streams of homely wit and wisdom flow gratis in and under all the streets; the badinage of busmen; the pithy discourse on relativity addressed by the harassed Tube conductor to the flustered passenger travelling hopefully in the wrong direction; the blasting invective, or the piercing gibe, launched by the taxi-driver at the innocent whom he has just failed to massacre.

The inanimate, no less than the human, contributes its quota of suggestive contrast and association. Across London's fairest open space looms London's ugliest pile of building, unparalleled outside the imaginings of a Heath Robinson. The shaft of a campanile that breathes Byzantium soars up from the narrow marches of Pimlico. Over the roofs of flats and offices it salutes the twin towers of a sister faith that tell of Norman England. They in turn pass on the greeting, across the river-bend, to the great dome which rears itself as the very hub of London's encircling wheel. And this is the London from which some

would flee. So true it is that man must reap as he has sown, that he may only hope to harvest interest and delight where he has scattered the seed of attentiveness and appreciation, whether his field be life or London.

## SHEEP IN THE PARKS

Of the rustic glimpses which still diversify London, one of the most satisfying is the flocks of sheep which animate the dark pastures in the summer months. They are no deliberate ornament, or piece of conscious stagecraft; they disappear, with their shepherd and his sheepdogs, and have their places taken by others indistinguishable from them, as part of the strictly commercial routine of supplying London with food. This makes them a thoroughly characteristic attraction of London scenery, of which the most arresting effects are so often the fortuitous and unplanned. Sheep are actually more familiar in the heart of London than in the landscapes of most Continental countries; but this is merely a reflection of the historic importance of this animal in our national life. Even now that the looms of Bradford are supplied so largely by flocks beyond the ocean, it remains appropriate that the urban glades within sight of the towers of the Houses of Parliament should be cropped by the prime contributors to the woolsack.

Sheep, and not cattle, are doubtless admitted to park pastures out of consideration for public convenience. The absence of the larger animal is no more to be taken as representative of its national status than where the like preponderance of sheep among the fields along the Dover line prompts the newly arrived foreign visitor to the conclusion that English farming is purely sheep-farming. Sheep are still of the greatest importance in our rural

life; and to those who have any eye for their breeds, or interest in their migrations, the outstanding point about these London sheep is that they are all "Scotch" sheep. Even in recent days, when changes in the producer's needs and the consumer's demands are quickly altering familiar local types almost all over the country, there is no mistaking either the white-faced Cheviots or the black-faced Scotch mountain-breed or even their less distinct crosses, for any breed native to the soil within a hundred miles of London. According to the standards of modern stock-breeding, these flocks that pass through the parks on their unconscious way to the butcher are remote in blood either from the compact and shapely Southdown, with a face lightly tanned as if by the Sussex seabreezes, or from their black-faced hybrid offspring which for years have munched the folded turnips over a large part of Southern England. These northern sheep are mainly fed on grass, or even, at a pinch, on heather; their headquarters are in that hill-country which stretches from the Tees to the Forth, and on into the Highlands. They crop London park grass with a discrimination that befits their northern origin, yet with a steady determination to make the most of it which is, perhaps, no less typical.

Most of these sheep arrive already shorn, with tight white coats, which even the summer air of London quickly sullies; but shearing-time is not unknown in the London parks, where Cockney children have gazed curiously as the fleeces peeled away under the shears, or in later years under the mechanical clipper. The detachment of the sheep, of the sheepdogs, and of the shepherd from the life of London about them is almost as complete as if Eildon or Hedgehope still hung above them, instead of the Albert Memorial or the new flats in Piccadilly. Since the prime purpose of the parks is to provide relief from the London stir, they could entertain no more harmonious visitors.

## LEAVES IN LONDON

When leaves fall thick in the streets under the slashing rain, London pays the penalty for its summer verdure. In the country, when the October rains strip the boughs, they set in motion the natural forces which co-operate with them. Earthworms begin to work more freely in the softened soil and after every wet night we see how busily they have been pulling the curled leaves into their burrows. The worms' immediate purpose is not quite clear, though it is thought that these plugs of leaves serve as a barrier against too inquisitive enemies. But, in the wider scheme of nature, the benefit of these interments is evident; each autumn fall of leaves is more quickly assimilated with the fertile layer of superficial humus. These layers of leaves and of leaf-mould, annually renewed, are also of great use in conserving the water supply. As the rain beats down the leaves, the leaves respond by catching and holding a great part of the rain, so that it passes down gradually into the soil instead of flowing in waste to the sea. A brief examination of almost any bed of decaying leaves in wood or shrubbery will further reveal their serviceableness to many insects and other small forms of life as winter bedding.

In London, where life is in many ways artificial, these functions of the fallen leaf are frustrated or almost a matter of indifference. Few slugs and spiders are domiciled in London streets and squares, and a still smaller fraction of humanity is interested in their comfort. By far the greater part of this huge area is paved or covered by roofs, and it is impervious both to the sapping and mining of earthworms and to the percolation of the rain. Fallen

leaves in wet weather cover the paving-stones with thick slippery plasters, and by a neat but misplaced exhibition of capillary attraction retain moisture which would otherwise escape into the gutters and give pavements a greater chance of drying before more fall.

But leaves are execrated almost equally at this season whether they hang on the trees, to obscure the windows and make dark afternoons yet darker, or plump earthwards in drifts dense as Vallombrosa's but under a far more humid sky. Of all the leaves that strew the London streets abundantly in autumn plane-leaves are the largest and wettest, and excite the heartiest imprecations of the goloshed and rheumatic citizen under his wind-plucked umbrella. As he splashes his dank and tempestuous way through an October rain-squall he can perhaps hardly be expected to reflect that the London plane in late October is merely displaying the defects of its good qualities. Elm-leaves are much smaller and less spongy; but how scarce and sickly a tree in London is the elm, and how swiftly it loses its spring freshness! It is exactly that amplitude and sappiness of the leaf of the plane which in autumn make it so sloppy that enable it to maintain a spring-like verdure through the summer heats and embower the London parks in green when most other trees are sombre and flagging. If planes were planted in London with more foresight the nuisance from darkened windows and encumbered pavements would be small. Planes are trees of great size, as London itself can show; yet they are crowded as saplings into spots so much too small for them when they grow bigger that there is no remedy against their darkness and dampness short of the most unsightly mutilation.

# FORGOTTEN LONDON

It was reported the other day that the excavators of Piccadilly had found, near the eastern end of the Green Park, a buried brick wall. "Roman remains" is a phrase that comes as quickly to the mind as "bad, bold baronet" or "immaculate evening dress." All remains are Roman until they are proved not to be; and this brick wall was a Roman remain until some one with a knowledge of bricks and mortar and of the historical geography of London declared it nineteenth-century and English. It turned out to be part of the foundation of the Isthmian Club. But at least one journal which announced the discovery showed commendable caution. "It is believed that" the Isthmian stood upon that spot. And some who, absent-mindedly walking eastward up Piccadilly, all but rub their eyes on looking up and not seeing the Isthmian there may have rubbed them in earnest on seeing that already the site of the Isthmian is on the way to being forgotten.

There was nothing very memorable about the club except its youthful gaiety in a light-hearted time, and its site, which was the finest of all the clubs in London. But how short is memory, how self-sufficient the actual moment, when so few years can turn common knowledge into a matter of faith! Middle-aged people may still feel strange in Aldwych and in Kingsway; many still miss old Holywell Street and Wych Street, and Clare Market, so kind to the eye and so unkind to the nose; the old Globe Theatre and the Opera Comique; the old Sardinian Chapel, the old narrow Strand about the two churches. To longer memories Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue are

interlopers. There are veterans who still miss Temple Bar and the gates in Cavendish Square, and the Seven Dials. And on the other hand, to the hurrying, forgetful world in general the new Regent Street is already Regent Street and not a usurper that has stolen the title; and twenty-five years hence it will be "believed that" the old, the real Regent Street, was low and stuccoed and full of light and grace.

Yet time was when there was no Regent Street, no Piccadilly, no Temple Bar, even no Westminster Abbey. In their day all these have been newcomers; and we who, walking down Whitehall, can scarcely even imagine the great gates across it and the palace of King Henry VIII, of which no stone is left, may remember that, compared with the Palace of Westminster hard by, Whitehall was a thing of yesterday. Digging deep in the soil of London, workmen find arrow-heads and spear-points of men who knew London before it had one stone laid upon another. To think that a quarter of a century can go far to wipe out the memory of a very noticeable building is to see London as a town of infinite antiquity. Shakespeare would have been lost in the London of John Gay, and Pepys a curious explorer in the London of Peter Cunningham; but the Londons that were before Shakespeare were many more than those that have come after him.

And the antiquity of London strikes home the harder because, in point of time, it is of manageable length. In Egypt, in Greece, even in Rome, the imagination gives up the attempt to hold time in its hand. The centuries, so far as the emotion of antiquity is concerned, become confounded, much as to an English peasant a Roman urn and an Elizabethan manor-house are both but "very old." But in London the beads of time are strung upon a cord of comprehensible length; and as bead comes after bead, she is seen to be full as old as she is, yet continually

hurried into change. To most of her lovers there comes a moment when she takes on the form that for them is definitely hers. All changes that went before went to the making of her; all changes that follow are but destruction. And while each generation or decade hurries to forget what was before it, each clings to the London that it knew and loved best.

## LONDON AND THE VIKINGS

The Viking collection in the London Museum is not large. The axes, swords, spears, bits and stirrup, chessmen and other pieces for games, and (most thrilling of all) the grappling hook do not fill many cases; but it is London's own doing that Viking remains in London should be few.

How long ago the Norsemen began first to raid and then to settle in Scotland and Ireland (and who travels in Caithness to-day travels in Scandinavia) there is no saying.

It was in 787 that the southern coasts of England knew the first recorded raid of the Vikings. In or about 842, and again some nine years later, they took London by storm. And then, soon after the middle of the ninth century, there came a pregnant change in their aims. They ceased to be mere marauders. Crowded out of their own narrow lands between the forest and the fjord, they tried to become settlers in this island, at whose climate every foreigner sneers, but which every foreigner has longed to possess. In 855 the Viking host wintered in Sheppey. In or about 866 the Danes began to attempt a regular conquest of England. The answer to that attempt was Alfred, King of the West-Saxons, the prince whose courage and whose virtues, whether at the head of his victorious host or in the dark days of hiding on Athelney, whether as warrior or as legislator, or as man of piety and of letters,

legend may decorate, but cannot over-praise. But in the very year after Alfred came to the Throne the Danes wintered in London; and even after the Dragon of Wessex had humbled the Raven at Aethandune and the Peace of Wedmore had given London to the English, a body of pirates "sat down" at Fulham; and it was not till 886 that Alfred could occupy London, restore it, and fortify it with his tower.

One thing more Alfred had done. He had made a fleet. His making of a fleet helped to teach the Vikings one of the many lessons which they learned from their incessant wars in England, Europe, Africa. They learned, as the weapons in the London Museum prove, a good deal about craftsmanship in the making and adorning of swords and spears and pieces to play games with. They learned also much about fighting. A century after the Peace of Wedmore the nature of the struggle had changed in many ways. The Danes were no longer marauding landsmen, who crossed the sea in very gay but very inadequate ships, which they abandoned on arrival. They were an army, with a fleet behind it. And in 992, when London comes prominently into the story again, East Anglia, with London in the van, attacks the Danes by sea and routs them.

The Danes had more than once destroyed London: in so doing they had helped to make London, and thereafter London let them know it. Though within the bounds of Mercia, she was in effect an independent commonwealth, and as obstinately insubordinate then as she has been ever since. In 994 began the resolute and definite attempt of Denmark, now a kingdom, to conquer and make a kingdom of England. Sweyn of Denmark, temporarily allied with Olaf of Norway, attacks London with ninety-four ships, and London beats them off. The Danes got help from the Normans, and London defies both. In 1009 the citizens of London unaided send the Danes packing. In

the next year the Danes hear that London is ready for them and dare march no nearer than Staines. In 1013 Sweyn and his son Canute come with a great and gaudy fleet; and London is the only place in England that hurls them back. It was the failure of the rest of England, and still more probably, the laches of that forerunner of Richard II and James II, Ethelred the Unready, that is, the redeless, the devoid of counsel, which caused London at last to acknowledge Sweyn as King.

The lapse was brief. A year later London hails the return of Ethelred from exile. Ethelred, says the Saga, now allied with Olaf of Norway, makes fast his ships to the posts of London Bridge, and, rowing with the tide, pulls it down, Danish defenders and all. London Bridge is broken down; but not the spirit of London. Canute is lord of all England, but not of London. When all England chooses Canute for King, London chooses Edmund Ironside. And while that mighty hero is crowding victory after victory into a few months, London again and again, be she ditched about or attacked in force, keeps Canute at bay. When the kingdom is divided between English and Dane by the conference at Olney, London goes to Edmund, not to Canute; and the Danes, as a favour, are allowed to winter peaceably in the city they could not conquer. Only after Edmund's death will this untamable town take a Dane for lord and allow Canute to summon the Witan of all England to meet in London.

That is why it is surprising to find so many relics of the Vikings, especially of the tenth and eleventh centuries, as the soil of London and the waters of Thames have yielded up to the London Museum. The Danes were not much in London: they found it an unhealthy spot. And one reason was undoubtedly this: that London was a unit, and not any of the kingdoms in England was that. Set aside the factions, divisions, jealousies of kings and

lords, and the treacheries which again and again blighted the flower of English valour and devotion, it was ever a difficult, almost an impossible, task to induce these self-centred English to leave their homes and their farming and come and fight. The Danes were "regulars"; the English, jibbing, as ever, at the notion of a standing army, were a militia. Others besides the Danes have learned what an improvised English army can do; but only in London were men ready and determined to protect their freedom and their goods.

Through the long struggle London grew to be what she should be—the capital of England. If Canute's dreams had come true, she would have grown then to be what she has since become, the capital of a great Empire—not a Danish Empire, but an English Empire, ruled from England, and stretching all across Northern Europe. That—and fortunately, perhaps—was not to be. But even the dreams of such men as Canute do not die; and not London only, but all England, owes to the Vikings something other than rapine and slaughter and dread. They brought but little of law, of culture, of art, but they brought vigour and initiative. They helped to weld, not London only, but England, into unity, so that when, half a century later, the Normans came, there was an England substantial enough to absorb the new influence, as it had absorbed the old. The Danish blood has gone to the making of the best English stock; and heroic Viking and heroic Englishman, once furious foes, are joined together in romance and story which to English minds are a perpetual spring of vitality and inspiration.

# BELLS

The silencing of the "great bell of Bow" is one of those dramatic little events which seem to make a pause in history. Whole vistas of civilization become suddenly conscious of themselves, as with one who wakes from sleep through the stopping of some familiar sound. The most remarkable vista, however, is not so much of the past or of the present as of the future. We may quite possibly be at the beginning instead of at the end of an understanding of the mystery of bells. The first thought suggested by a great bell is that it is an obsolete but beautiful thing, to be preserved solely for the sake of all that it tells of symbolism, of legendry, of the life of cities and of the countryside in other days than these. We think of Bede and Dunstan, of curfew, of an age when the "clarke of the Bow bell, with the yellow locks," was liable to "have knocks" from the apprentices of Chepe if he rang a quarter of an hour or so out of due time.

It has been an almost constant characteristic of bells that the art-value which has been hitherto perceived has nearly always been that of association. Even Hauptmann's fairies were limited in their outlook. The bells must ring as they were heard "in summer-time on Bredon," or "across the snow," or by "the pleasant waters of the river Lee." They must "ring out the old, ring in the new," give the alarm of war or sound the peal of victory, draw forth the "dreaming bridegroom" to marriage or toll for the passing spirit. Always to the listener the message must be a symbolic expression of faith or a reminder of human experience. One might hazard the view that nine cultivated people out of ten regard bells as an accidental

survival of the primitive, and the Sunday-morning chimes, sounding against each other, as a logical cacophony, tolerable only for its purpose.

On the other hand there remains the indisputable fact that, considered ideally as a musical instrument, the three-toned bell is perfect, as the violin is perfect. The grace of its form—the curve of "haunch," "waist," and "mouth"—is not merely coincident with the grace of its music, but the cause of it. The probability seems to be that the only "primitive" thing about great bells is the way in which they are commonly used. Certainly nothing could be more worthy of such a word than the clumsy and false-noted tune occasionally replacing that abstruse arithmetic of the campanologists which has afforded combined lament and physical exercise to white-bearded "College Youths" through so many centuries.

It seems possible that we are just now on the verge of very great discoveries in this matter. Even as it is, the possibilities of a carillon, played upon a rightly mechanized keyboard by one ringer, suggest infinite development. It may even be that all those associations, all those scales, "caters," "grandsire bobs," and other apparently meaningless exercises in rhythm, and all those random relationships to life, have been due to faint perceptions of snatches of a possible music which only the future can co-ordinate and fulfil. The bells of our church-towers might, in point of fact, be regarded as isolated instruments in a potentially vast orchestra, with a landscape as concert room. The time may conceivably come quite soon when a musician will have it in his power to control the bells of an entire town and to make aerial symphonies of which the "Dinora" dance from the spire of Antwerp Cathedral would be but a faint presage. To what extent the "radio" may advance upon the transmission of single bells and carillons like

those of Armagh, York, Malines, and Croyland Abbey, and the clock-checking voice of Big Ben, remains to be seen.

## DEEP-SEA SUPERSTITIONS

Those who know them report that, when at sea, the Scottish herring-fishers hold it unlucky to speak of a pig, a rabbit, a salmon, or a minister of religion. Most of our readers will be familiar with the ban on one of these subjects: the minister of religion. His presence has ever been unlucky, a harbinger of death, whether by land or sea. In the days of chivalry, should you meet with a priest on your way to battle or tourney, you were wise to turn back. On board ship he was a Jonah. And it needed no excessive caution to attribute to his name and title the ill-luck inherent in his person.

The ban upon the other unmentionable things may perhaps be known to professed students of this lore; but they are far enough from being common knowledge to excite a little speculation. The rabbit, and that naturally cleanly beast, the pig, are, Biblically and traditionally, unclean; and though swine's grease used to bring luck to Scottish brides, the Highlanders, we believe, do not, or ostensibly do not, eat of their flesh. But the rabbit is not so unlike the hare as to make it impossible that he has come to be credited with the hare's malign influence. In Scotland the hare is so far technically "game" that, like other game, his appearance brings disaster to soldier, raider, or traveller unless he is promptly killed: in England he was as dangerous as a parson, and, according to Sir Thomas Browne, with juster cause, because "the ground of the conceit was probably no more than this, that a fearful animal, passing by us, portended unto us something to be feared." The name of the pig, again, might suggest

the old saying: "an't please the pigs," which meant, of course, the pyx, and said nothing else than "God willing." About the salmon, speculation must be wilder yet, for it could not be seriously submitted that the herring-fishers refuse to name the salmon because these swaggering river fish diminish their trade.

This easy guesswork leaves untouched a deeper subject for speculation: why men who have so many real dangers to face as sailors have should be of all men the readiest to beware of imaginary dangers. But a very short time ago no ship ever set sail on a Friday; whistling on board ship still brings a gale; and we suspect that the caul of a new-born child is still, in spite of Tom Hood's jolly mariner, a sure preventive of drowning. Mingle the deep-sea sailor with the Highlander, and there is sure to be a rich store of the rules through which the simple and naturally religious mind pays respect to powers and laws which it does not presume to understand. It is knowledge not ignorance of danger, of loneliness, of the might of nature —by modern Highlanders inherited, perhaps, rather than experienced, but daily truth to them that go down to the sea in ships—which makes these men bear themselves cautiously and humbly before the unknown. Let Mr. Spectator sneer, and John Gay scoff, and Sir Thomas Browne, with all his successors in rationalism, explain, something of the deep-sea spirit lingers in most people yet, and is no bad thing in character and conduct.

Simple, ignorant, captious though the forms that it takes may seem, this humility of spirit, when it is an honest part of a larger humility, has its virtue in days of a good deal of intellectual arrogance. It will be time to laugh at such simpleness when no door in the more expensive parts of London is numbered 12A because the householder is afraid to live at No. 13. And the prudent man may find a good example in a book where he never looks for it in

vain. "Me seemeth," wrote Montaigne, "I may well be excused, if I rather accept an odde number, than an even; Thursday in respect of Friday; if I had rather make a twelfth or fourteenth at a table, than a thirteenth. . . . All such fond conceits, now in credit about us, deserve at least to be listened unto."

## DRAGONS

Dragons are on the whole a degenerate race. No modern species attributable to that family attains even the proportions of the rather effete and lackadaisical example whose death-throes are depicted on our pound notes, far less the capacity and voracity recorded of the Dragon of Wantley and other distinguished predecessors. In this general dearth of substantial specimens those Dutch and American naturalists are to be congratulated who have respectively discovered in the East Indies a race of lizards large enough to pose in the dragon's part, who have transported them across the seas "in a special cabin heated with steam," and exhibited them in New York behind wire netting. It is true that these East Indian dragons are stated to be little more than nine feet long; but even that is considerably larger than other recent claimants to dragon honours. The so-called flying lizards or dragons of the same Indo-Malayan region are measured not in feet but in inches; and, although they contrive to fulfil one of the qualifications of dragons by sustaining themselves for short gliding flights, their butterfly-like markings and generally attractive aspect proclaim them as inefficient competitors with the sufficiently solemn and repellent saurians which have now been discovered.

Earth still holds several species of crocodiles and their allies better fitted by repulsiveness of appearance and

genuine formidableness to maintain the draconian tradition. But since the Middle Ages, at any rate, dragons have generally been regarded as among the terrestrial fauna, mostly dwelling in caves, and the claims of carnivorous aquatic saurians have been neglected. Although the prime conception of a dragon seems to have been chiefly based on a large snake, most fully equipped aspirants to the honour were later expected to breathe fire. This gift was probably regarded as incompatible with the aquatic habit, and the steam heat of a cabin must be regarded as an inadequate substitute. A full-sized caiman or alligator with the incendiary gift added to that of flight would indeed be an intimidating neighbour.

Though fossil deposits have failed to yield evidence of any authentic firedrake, there are, of course, many imposing relics, in "scarped cliff and quarried stone," of giant saurians, both flying and carnivorous, which lorded it over the mesozoic landscapes. A pedestrian and grazing dragon must have been a little unimpressive, whatever its size; yet the larger flying lizards, or their massive carnivorous cousins, would no doubt have inspired enough fear and loathing for any dragon in a human being who had happened to be about to see them. But man's destiny was to contend with the great carnivorous mammals, not with the huger but probably stupider saurians; and the enormous gulf of time between the extinction of the pterodactyls and the dinosaurs and the emergence of the human species rules out the attractive supposition that the long-surviving belief in the existence of dragons was based on some encounter, in a remote secluded recess, with survivors of the cretaceous epoch. The most that can have happened to link the giant lizards with the ideal dragon-form is that wondering eyes may have gazed, ages ago, at their bones sprawling in a landslip, and reinforced with new details the original snakelike concept.

## CROCODILES IN SCOTLAND

The strong sons of Rotary have been surveying their great movement. In a brief life Rotary has many changes to its credit. Its symbol is a wheel, and its object—as might be guessed from the eager and restless country of its birth—is to see that the world keeps moving onwards and upwards. Changes may cause pangs, for there is no gain in one way without some loss in another. But you cannot make an omelette, or for that matter a Hamlet, without breaking eggs, and a movement of uplift which would help business men to grow wings must contemplate the most far-reaching changes without a tremor. Nevertheless, even the Rotarians of Scotland confess themselves a little ill at ease at the latest improvement for Scotland which a helpful fellow-Rotarian has proposed.

All through history many men have asked themselves what Scotland lacked that she could not keep her sons. Some have found the answer to be in what other countries possessed. Some have answered that Scotland lacked tourists, and large coveys are now bred regularly for each season. It has been left to a Glasgow Rotary luncheon to produce the final answer, powerful and unexpected. Scotland lacks crocodiles. The soil of Scotland is poor. Agriculture must be supported by subsidiary industries, and what better subsidiary industry than crocodiles? There is a safe market for their strong and ornamental hides. Women love crocodile-skin. They love to bruise the reptile's head by wrapping his hide round their feet. They love the suggestion of strength that his name gives to their purses. But many women go through the streets with a secret sorrow, and more go duped, because their shoes and

bags are not really crocodile. Much, very much, that passes for the fierce and exotic crocodile is but the gentle and homely calf. Cruel animals have often masqueraded as mild ones, but here the tables are turned. It is impossible not to praise the versatility and dramatic gifts of the calf. It speaks much for one bucolic beast that he can make of his inside mock-turtle and of his outside mock-crocodile. But Rotary stands for what is genuine, and there is no real reason why Scotsmen and Scotswomen, who set so special a value on strong purses, should not grow the strongest purses at home.

It is true that a crocodile farm is not so simple as a poultry farm. Pigs are easier to drive. When the show crocodiles of the Zoo were moved from one warm sleeping pool to another, the journey attracted a degree of public attention usually reserved for the movements of high personages of State. But crocodiles can be farmed, and their Rotarian advocates gave many a timely hint. Crocodiles are not Scotsmen to flourish in all parts of the globe. But the hothouse principle is nothing new, and, if grapes can be grown in Scotland, so can crocodiles be hatched there. It is not pretended that the crocodile will be pleased at the vile purpose for which he is intended. He has been worshipped in his day, and nothing is worse for reptile character than that. Still, it is the way of Rotary to make light of difficulties, and to see the good side of everybody, including reptiles. But the trouble is that the crocodile is a bad Rotarian. He pretends—it is proverbial—to a fellow-feeling which is not genuine. Like Maria Theresa at the partition of Poland, he weeps but he takes. And some English alarm is not unnatural. What if these creatures catch the spirit of their new country, and, rejoicing in the dangerous freedom that the kilt will allow their swishing tails, come over the border in search of a higher standard of life?

## TORTOISES

In the calm of the April garden it is refreshing to observe the mailed and contemplative tortoise, newly awakened from its repose. The tortoise does not grumble at the English winter, but evades it by the simple process of self-burial; and when the time is ripe it rouses itself to partake with an exemplary temperance of the animation of spring. Though it moves at a reflective pace, those who study the tortoise know that it is no mere limpet content with liberty to be measured by inches. Its winter torpor destroys neither its faculty of locomotion nor its sense of direction, and on emerging from under the south wall of the greenhouse it will sometimes at once make its way with undeviating accuracy to some hillock at the other end of the garden, where it last basked comfortably under summer's declining sun.

By the deceitfulness of their vendors tortoises are sometimes introduced into gardens in the expectation that they will make themselves useful by destroying beetles and slugs. Gardeners who buy them in this hope are unversed in the diet of the various branches of the chelonian family. The garden tortoise is no carnivore, like the snapping turtle, or the little water-tortoises sometimes sold in naturalists' shops. Even under the demoralization of captivity, it almost invariably remains a vegetarian; the most sinuous dew-worm excites in it no voracious passion; and it will gaze with eyes of utter unaggressiveness at the fattest and blackest slug. It is a vegetarian of almost the strictest type, and can only be induced by the most flattering attentions to include bread-and-milk in its diet. But it is an example to some other vegetarians in the cleanliness

of its meals. It chooses the freshest lettuce leaf, the most sprucely golden dandelion blossom, and closely grazes the clover-patch without swallowing dirt. On the drink question it displays a characteristic moderation; it drinks when it is thirsty, and that appears to be about once in five years.

Though unfavourable to poets, if we can trust the familiar account of the death of Æschylus, it was associated very early with musicians, and co-operated, though perhaps without enthusiasm, in the production of the lyre from its own shell. To stringed instruments of more modern type it appears indifferent rather than positively hostile, and we may confidently conclude from its gait and demeanour that jazz music does not appeal to it. From the vocal arts it almost abstains, though it will hiss if annoyed at its dinner, and has been reported by those who have presumed upon their acquaintance with it to emit a slight piping sound when in love. Such an economy of the vital spark prolongs its glow; and, though our tortoises rarely reach us with a birth certificate, they occasionally prove at least man's coevals. Yet, as moralists tell us, we live by quality, not length of days; and, in an age when the motor-car exacts an almost idolatrous deference, there may be no harm in a few intervals of tortoise worship.

## RUSS

Russ is dead, after a long and honourable career. Russ, the resident rat-catcher of the Lion House at the Zoo, who had retained to the patriarchal age of sixteen years an efficiency in the discharge of his functions which might have been envied by many a younger cat. He came to Regent's Park in early youth, a "wild thing out of the wild woods" of Russia, so aflame with the fierce spirit of

liberty that his captors despaired of ever inducing in him such docility as would permit of his public exhibition. But a just and proper consideration for his free birth and distinguished ancestry soon mellowed his nature, and in due course the Zoological Society appointed him to the important office that he was to adorn for so many years. In the Lion House he found his vocation and a happiness he could scarcely have attained in his native land. The constitutional upheavals of that unhappy country would have deprived him in the prime of life of the immemorial feline birthright, the contemplation of royalty ; in England, *egregius exsul*, he enjoyed the singular felicity of living always in the presence of the king of beasts. By day he was to be seen stalking with the dignity of a court chamberlain the length of the hall where the human mob seek audience of captive majesty ; when the sunset hour shut the palace doors upon the vulgar, he was privileged to remain and share the confidences of the mighty in their hours of ease.

His was a unique position, for to him alone of its occupants the stone walls of the Lion House made no prison, nor its iron bars a cage. Where lion and tiger, leopard and jaguar, suffered the daily humiliation of eating flesh that others had killed, Russ went proudly about his business, slaying and devouring his own prey, a free hunter as his fathers and theirs had been from the beginning. With his landlords, the Fellows, his relations were cordial, but not subservient ; he ranged their Gardens at his own will, sometimes visiting the bears for the sake of old memories of Russia, sometimes the sea-lions, who keep so excellent a table for the connoisseur of fish, and not forgetting to pay an occasional condescending call upon his poor relations in the Small Cat House. He lived, in short, the life of a gentleman of substance and position, whose court appointment provided him with that daily task which is

necessary to self-respect, but allowed him also to enjoy that *otium cum dignitate* on which his family have always so justly insisted.

It will readily be seen that Russ had need of the highest qualities of tact and discretion in his relations with the great ones whose domestic life he was privileged to share. It would have been easy for a cat of less perfect delicacy of feeling to have become puffed up with false pride in his own liberty and to imply in his demeanour a taunt at the misfortunes of the princely captives. The inscriptions marking their houses—Felis Leo, Felis Pardus, and the rest—might have induced a coxcomb's arrogance in one who was conscious of being Felis's self. But Russ was an aristocrat by birth, and had a soul that scorned such pettiness; he knew that by a proper respect for the superior rank and dignity of others, even in adversity, he was best able to demonstrate his own. So he passed on his lawful occasions from cage to cage along the line, welcomed by the occupant of each, recognized without question as a member of the family, and honoured of them all.

So faultlessly sympathetic was his deportment that the monarch himself, Abdulla the great lion, did not disdain his companionship in play, and he slept at night between the royal paws. As to the exact character of this singularly frank and perfect intercourse between sovereign and subject we can only speculate, for it is needless to say that Russ was never guilty of those breaches of confidence that have sometimes sullied the reputation of courtiers less discreet than he. But it is permissible to suppose that, while the generous heart of Russ was filled with those sentiments of affectionate loyalty on which fallen kings have always been able to rely, Abdulla could contemplate the happiness of his faithful servant without envy, seeing in him the type of the spiritual victory of their common race over Man, who has made of the dog his friend and of

the horse his servant, but has imposed no mastery on the feline soul. Aloof and proud, yielding no allegiance where they ask no favour, the great cats and the small go their ways, and Russ, like all his kind, passes to the happy hunting grounds, "waving his wild tail and walking by his wild lone."

## ANIMAL PERFECTION

Sir Oliver Lodge once said that man was hampered by his animal ancestry, and because of it he sometimes seemed evil and ugly, when in fact he was only immature. That is one human attitude to animals—they are our poor relations and we do not like to be reminded of it in our own behaviour; we long for the ape and the tiger to die in us, especially the ape, who is the ugliest of animals because the most human. But there is another attitude, frequently expressed by Walt Whitman, who exhorts us to imitate the aplomb of animals, and expressed also long ago by the Egyptians and others who worshipped animal gods. We are very conscious of our own immaturity; but many animals, especially those of the cat tribe, seem to us to be magnificently perfected. They are always as expressive in their movements as Njinski or Pavlova at their moments of inspiration. Unlike us, they know what they want, and when they have got it say so in every turn of their bodies with magnificent but unconscious art. A cat stretching itself before the fire on a hearth-rug is like a piece of music; but not so a human being, least of all a Western human being of the male sex. Yet there are human beings, not Western or civilized, who seem to have this mature if finite perfection. At the cinema, for instance, you may see a film of some Arab village, where the men, unaware of the camera, walk about like gods; but the film

stars, very much aware of the camera, and doing their best to be worthy of it, are not like gods at all. You know all the time that they are film stars, aiming at a perfection of expressiveness which they too seldom achieve.

In fact, the human race, as soon as it rises to what we call civilization and the larger consciousness is æsthetically spoilt by the fact that it is too much aware of the camera. If these magnificent Orientals are like cats, we Westerns are like dogs, those uneasy dogs that are always comparing themselves with their masters, and can do nothing without wondering whether it will be approved of.

It is, no doubt, the secret of our advance that we have grown to be dimly aware of our destiny; but still we envy the animals and the Arabs, who seem to fulfil their destiny without being aware of it. We wish we could walk and wear our clothes like a sheikh, or repose after a meal like a tiger. We have lost for ever that animal aplomb which Whitman wished to recapture; we have eaten of the tree of knowledge, and the more we go on eating of it the more we wish we were otherwise. We have, in fact, a standard which is not our own; and it intimidates us so that all through life we are rehearsing rather than performing and for a performance which, we hope, will take place sometime and somewhere in the future. On that we have pinned our faith, and it is useless to attempt to go back on it.

The noble savage cannot be our model in morals, or manners, or art, or anything else. It is in vain that our young sculptors, with Phidias and Michelangelo behind them, try to imitate the aplomb of Negro sculpture. That is unconscious, and they are conscious; that is pitiless, and they, however much they may be ashamed of it, are pitiful. We are, it has been said, like violinists who have to learn the instrument and compose the music as they play. The performance, therefore, is not a masterpiece; but then we do not live only for æsthetics, or to burn with

a pure, hard, gemlike flame. We are committed to imperfection, and must make the best of it, though it is good for our conceit sometimes to admire the perfection of the tiger and the butterfly and the lilies of the field.

## THE SAINT OF ASSISI

St. Francis of Assisi like almost all men who have deeply influenced their age, was a child of his time. It was a stirring time—a time of profound changes, social, political, and religious. The whole world of thought and feeling in the West was shaken and transformed by the thrust of bold ideas, some the new birth of circumstance, others the inheritance of ancient civilizations—Jewish, Greek, Roman, and Arabic—now brought by fresh channels into the general stock of European knowledge. Of this vast revolution, wider than the Renaissance, deeper than the Reformation, the rise of the mendicant Orders of Francis and of Dominic was at once a manifestation and a cause. There was nothing new in the doctrine that Francis taught. Even his plea for a practical return to apostolic poverty had been forestalled by many would-be reformers, orthodox and heretical. Full faith in all the tenets of the mediæval Church is stamped upon his career and on his authentic utterances. Yet, a few years after his death the novices of his Order in Oxford were hardily debating such questions as "Whether God exists." Speculations of that kind troubled him not at all. A little later and a part of his Order were in flagrant rebellion against the Holy See; Francis was the most loyal and the most submissive son and servant of the Papacy.

What was new and startling to his generation was his imposition of this evangelical poverty in its literal sense upon all who accepted his mode of life. Only the special

mind and feeling of the opening thirteenth century could have moved thousands to accept such an obligation.

It was an age of enthusiasms and of impulsive mass movements, of movements often leavened by strong popular and democratic tendencies. Feudalism had already broken down, although traces of it were to survive into modern times. It had threatened to convert the hierarchy into a caste by keeping the most valuable benefices in the hands of great local families, the cities and towns had risen against it, and in Italy had already overcome it. In those towns the "minores," the classes with few or no municipal rights, were threatening the governing oligarchies, and outside the walls serfs and peasants were pressing novel claims against their lords, or against the cities who had seized the former lordships. The Crusades had failed or degenerated, and their issue had discredited and weakened the established system in many ways. Trade and commerce had risen to new importance, and the economic consequences of their development had borne hardly upon most classes. Money-lending upon extortionate terms had become a particularly cruel engine of oppression, which merchants and bankers wielded without pity or remorse. Dearths were common because food supplies depended mainly upon local harvests, the diseases which come from overcrowding and from filth were endemic, and leprosy, as the life of Francis shows, was so common that the Church had a special rite of much awful beauty for the consignment of the sufferers to the living death that was their lot.

Into this world of misery and discontent, aggravated by contrast with insolent displays of extravagance and splendour, Francis and his early followers came with their message of absolute renunciation. The amazing promptitude of the answer shows that it met a great spiritual and moral need. The chronicles probably exaggerate, but it is certain that within a very few years the Order spread all

over Christendom, and that its members were to be counted by thousands. The charity of Francis, like all true Christian charity, was a tender humanity informed by Divine love, by the two commandments on which "hang all the law and the prophets." It reached to all men, to the noble, the learned and wealthy, who came to him for guidance, as to the outcasts and the criminals, whom he sought out and succoured. He would have all in his brotherhood without novitiate or test—except the one test that they must first sell all that they possessed. For the poor he had deep reverence—for his Master had been poor—and he took shame to himself if he found any poorer than he.

And the men who preached this doctrine in a corrupt and unsettled society, where money was worshipped as basely and gathered as rapaciously as in any other time, themselves practised it to the letter. They preached it with the homely directness that comes of deep conviction, and the multitudes who flocked to hear were, like themselves, believers. They shuddered at the awful menaces which Francis did not spare them; they wept for their sins; they found consolation and peace in the gospel truths he brought home to them in his simple addresses, in the noble prayers and in the familiar hymns or canticles he composed. He was no orator; he sometimes had to tell his hearers that all he had prepared to say to them had gone out of his head, but the unstudied words that followed gave them all they wanted. He spoke from his heart to two or three gathered together, as he spoke from his heart to a whole population crowding the piazza.

Innumerable legends gathered round him, legends often of rare beauty and instinct with a spirit proper only to these first Franciscan times. From them we learn best the character and the feelings of the man. He took intense delight in all created things. All to him are the works of God, each after its kind doing homage and worship to its

maker. "Sir Brother sun" and "Sister moon," "Brother fire," "Sister water," and "Sister, our Mother earth," with her "varied fruits, coloured flowers and grass," show forth to him the glory of "the Most High, the Almighty, the good Lord, to whom they all appertain, and whom no man is worthy to name." He loved music, he heard angelic harmonies, he sang and bade his brothers sing joyously. "Mortem cantando suscepit." He loved the woods and the mountains and the grass of the fields. He loved flowers so well that he deemed it no infidelity to his dear poverty not merely to permit, but to enjoin, that his brothers should set apart "a fair little plot planted with all sweet-smelling herbs and with all herbs which bear fair flowers" that in their season these might invite those who saw to give praise. "For every creature speaks and cries aloud, 'God made me for thee, O man.'"

Of his love for living things and of their love for him there are legends without end. His "sisters," the birds, once gathered to hear him preach. Another day the swallows, busy with their family affairs, twittered so much and so loudly that the Saint's congregation could not hear him. So Francis remonstrated with them: "My sisters swallows, it is now time that I too should speak, for up to now you have said enough. Hearken to the word of the Lord and be silent and still until it is finished." And the swallows forthwith hearkened. A cicala at one time joined regularly in his devotions, until, in the goodness of his heart, he released her from this unusual function, and in the supreme days of the Alvernia a falcon daily summoned him to Matins. Everybody knows, or ought to know, all about Brother Wolf of Agobbio, whom the Saint won to live as a respectable citizen until he died and was honourably buried.

It would need a very profound knowledge of the history and the psychology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

to form a just estimate of the work which Francis conceived, and of the work which he actually accomplished. M. Sabatier says boldly that he saved Christianity, and undoubtedly he brought to millions a new and living sense of the Christian message. But the age into which he was born was an age of almost universal superstition; he and his first "socii" were so penetrated by a sense of the unseen that the supernatural and the miraculous were the atmosphere of their daily lives. In miracles, as in the wonders of the visible universe, they saw the operation of the same Almighty power, beneficent and inscrutable in both. They held, as true Christians have always held, that repentance and love are the conditions of forgiveness and of grace, although they also held an unshaken faith in the need and the efficacy of sacraments received in these conditions.

However imperfectly, then or later, the masses of mankind have assimilated their sublime mysticism, it has never ceased to illuminate the lives of countless disciples. The great poem of mediæval Christianity, saturated though it is by the scholasticism from which Francis vainly sought to seclude his brethren, shows how, even when the Order was torn by many scandals, his story and his teaching moved deeply religious minds. A hundred biographies, letters, and "ricordi" of obscure lives bear the same witness. From Dante and through Dante down to the Renaissance and down even to our day, that story and teaching have been a vivifying force in the art and literature of Italy, and through them a factor in the moral education of mankind.

The harvest sown by Francis is too vast for survey here. He failed in the aim and the longing of his life, and he knew that he had failed. The Order he left behind him was destined to nurture many saints, known and unknown, and to do great service for the Church and for religion. But

already it had ceased to be the Order of his dreams and his desires. It had wandered far from his ideals in his life; it was to wander from them farther after his death, but it was always to venerate his memory, always to keep alive in a sordid and material world something of his renunciation, something of his high joy in Brother Sun and Mother Earth, something, too, of his welcome to Sister Death. "I have done what it was mine to do," cried the dying Saint. It was his to reassert these apostolic truths, to spread them abroad, and to hand them down among the living forces of the historic Christian faith.

## ARMISTICE DAY

Armistice Day, and the rites which it calls into observance, need no explanation. At eleven o'clock, for the duration of two minutes, on the anniversary of the immortal day which it commemorates, silence will seal the lips and still the movements of the entire nation. There is no need to inquire, after the manner prescribed of old, What is this?—nor any need that the answer, were it to be given in the traditional formula, should come as a new revelation —"By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out." Nevertheless, within a few moments of the precise hour of the clock at which the greatest and most awful of wars was finished, when armies of unprecedented numbers and unparalleled equipment stood at length off from one another after more than fifty months of unremitting strife, it is appropriate that we should examine ourselves sincerely before participating in this sacrament of memory. Formal and external reverence will be, of itself, unworthy of the state of mind which it should express, if, within, the beginnings of indifference are allowed to encroach, or the more positive assaults of disillusionment to make headway.

In every act of commemoration there is the danger, if not the certainty, that conformity to custom will, in process of time, mask feelings which are not in accordance with its spirit. As the years advance we shall have to ask ourselves more and more searchingly if the great silence means to us what it meant at first. As a piece of ritual it is unique, in that participation in it is not as participation in any form of commemoration. It overtakes us all —the loyal, the thankful, and the proud, as well as the doubters, the waverers, and the superficial. Yet were the latter elements among us—through force of circumstances, through want of instruction, through the distraction of affairs, even through the natural buoyancy of the human spirit which can make men forget their saddest as well as their happiest experiences—to prevail or materially to increase in numbers, the silence, and much else that Armistice Day brings round, would be a mockery.

Armistice Day will in truth largely fail of its sacred purpose if it should meet with an inadequate spiritual response. The vast majority of the nation will, there can be no question, entertain neither misgiving nor misunderstanding as to its significance; but it would be too complacent an optimism to assume that their sentiments are shared by all. The world has lived through some years of peace or peace-making; and such peace as has been established may well be thought to be the lassitude of exhaustion rather than the fruit of restored good-will. Neither in national nor international affairs is there much to offer encouragement to the faint-hearted. There are prophetic voices that declare that, so far from the worst being over, it has but begun, and that henceforth the decline of civilization, as this age has known it, is irresistible and inevitable. Whole nations and vast areas of territory lie impoverished, as it would seem, beyond assessment. The fundamental conditions of peace-making

and recovery are, in the eyes of many, yet wholly unfulfilled.

There is a tendency to assign all present afflictions to the war, and to assign to the war, and to the victory which we and our Allies ultimately won, nothing but affliction and calamity. On all belligerents the scourge seems to have fallen; for the entire equilibrium of European society has been jarred by it, and neither men nor measures appear to be competent to restore it. After this manner, pessimism would seem to be justified of its children, who may perhaps be shocked and angered into publishing their disbelief in the righteousness of a cause which, but a few years ago, none would have openly dared or cared to dispute. The sacrifice of the war, they will say, if not aloud, yet in their hearts, was in vain. The world, and with it this nation, lost everything by it. The war was a crime, and all those who took part in it were criminals. For proof look at the world, look at Europe, look at this country to-day.

Now it is this degeneracy of despair, negation, and recrimination which Armistice Day happily comes every year to dispel. What do we commemorate during these hours? Not, one may venture to think, physical victory, all-important as such victory was to the continuance of our race upon the earth; not even the cessation of the most intense and exhausting of wars; not even the vindication of justice against the violating hand of iniquity, essential as it is that that principle should be vindicated among the nations in their dealings with one another. None of these, primarily, but the lives of our brothers and sons who sacrificed themselves for our sakes and for the sake of all they held, and we hold, dear. Against those lives nothing can be set worthily in the balance by us who owe to them all that we still have.

It may be much less than we should have if there had been no war. We should then have had wealth, ease,

mirth, to a far greater extent than we have now; opportunities and means for experimenting in many desirable reforms would have been ours; and, above all, we should have those men, the pick of the nation's manhood, still with us. All these blessings might have been ours, would have been ours, had not fate ordained otherwise, and had not our conscience, and the consciences of the men whose deaths we remember to-day, willed it otherwise.

To complain, if we keep the true meaning of Armistice Day constantly in our minds, of impoverishment, of high taxation, of material discomfort, of ambitions thwarted, of intended improvements and developments set back, is in reality impossible, unless we are not materialists, but sensualists of the most grovelling order. There is scarcely a creed or a philosophy worth the name which, whatever its ultimate views of the universe and its meaning may be, has not learnt to recognize that there are certain permanent and inviolable values attaching to human life on this minute fragment of the cosmos which outweigh everything that appertains to the outward trappings of life, because they are not to be measured by those trappings, but are of the soul, of the life, of man, and of none other.

In the war everything, whether of earth or of Heaven, was put to the stake, as this nation discovered, perhaps slowly at first, but apocalyptically at the end. And most of all, those transcendental values, which in the last resort are man in his essence, were given over to the test. How they acquitted themselves in the trial the deeds and memories of our dead bear witness; and we, too, by our very presence here ourselves, in our homes—albeit, perhaps, impoverished—at our businesses—albeit, perhaps, none too prosperous—in the land which our fathers bequeathed us, bear witness likewise, whether we do so gladly and willingly, as we ought, or grudgingly and sceptically, as in our better moments we know we ought not.

## THE SACK OF ROME

May 6, old style, is the four hundredth anniversary of one of the most frightful calamities that ever befell a renowned and splendid city. On May 6, 1527, the Imperialists burst into Rome. They were a horde of starving and undisciplined mercenaries, German and Spanish, who had looked forward for months to the plunder of Florence or of Rome as compensation for the pay they had not received and for the hardships they had undergone. The Spaniards were under the Constable de Bourbon, who on a quarrel with Francis I had deserted to his enemy, Charles V. Fründsberg commanded the German Landsknechts. The assault had begun with doubtful fortune. A heavy fire of musketry from the walls checked the advance of the Imperialists. Bourbon called upon them to come on, and, splendid in his shining armour, set his foot upon a storming ladder. As he did so, he fell back mortally wounded. Readers of Benvenuto Cellini will remember the mendacious goldsmith's claim that he or one of his friends fired the fatal shot. With the entry of the Imperialists resistance ceased. Clement VII and his cardinals about him had fled to the castle of Sant' Angelo by the passage from the Vatican. Rome, opulent, civilized, luxurious, and defenceless—the Rome of Julius and of Leo—was at the mercy of a ferocious soldiery lusting for slaughter, rapine, destruction, and revenge.

To these hands the wonderful city was left without restraint. In the first few hours after the occupation hundreds of unarmed men, women, and children were butchered in the streets, and the palaces and houses were fired in many places. It was with difficulty that Ferrante

Gonzaga, the officer in command of the Imperialist artillery, could make his way to the Palazzo Colonna, where his mother, Isabella of Este, was sheltering a crowd of panic-stricken refugees. Even she had to compound with the soldiers for the ransom of her guests. Money was the spoil they prized most, and ransom was the best way to secure it. Nothing was spared. Churches and monasteries were favourite objects of spoliation by reason of the treasure of sacred vessels of gold and silver offerings with which the devotion of centuries had endowed them.

The fanaticism of the Lutherans found a special zest in the profanation of what was sacred to the Catholic Romans. They stabled their horses in St. Peter's and in the Stanze of the Vatican, all fresh and glorious from the brush of Raphael. Only the authority and the presence of Philibert of Orange, who had succeeded Bourbon in the command, saved the Vatican library from wholesale plunder and destruction. Raphael's tapestries for the Sistine were stolen and sold for the sake of the gold thread; manuscripts which the Renaissance Popes had collected were used for horse litter; while the streets were strewn with fragments of documents from the Papal archives, from the archives of the Capitol, and from those of convents and palaces. The loss to posterity in this kind was irreparable and immense.

The Pope by this time was a close prisoner in Sant' Angelo. He escaped to Orvieto in December, where the agents of Henry VIII, who came to press for the divorce with Catharine of Aragon, describe his piteous plight. Not until October, 1528, did he return to the ruins of the capital over which he had reigned in the height of its magnificence and of its beauty. Four-fifths of the houses were uninhabited. Well might Erasmus write that her sufferings were more cruel than Goths and Gauls had brought upon her. "In well-known letters Bembo, Sadoleto, and Erasmus

record the profound grief and horror with which her fate and the fate of her refined and cultivated society filled the most accomplished minds of the age. They spoke of it, says Gregorovius, as St. Jerome spoke of her fate under Alaric. "The instructress of noble minds, the mother of all nations, lay in the dust." "Her fall," says Erasmus, "was not the fall of a city, but the fall of the world."

It was indeed the fall of one world and the rise of another; the fall of the world which bore its richest and its loveliest Dead Sea fruits in the Rome of the half-century before; the rise of the world of the Reformation and the "counter-Reformation" with its complex and measureless reactions, even yet unexhausted, upon the thought and the morals of mankind. It is not possible to trace with any certainty the intricate results of the great upheaval in which the sack of Rome was a turning point and to some extent a cause. The broad fact is that the full Renaissance atmosphere had gone beyond recall, and that very different ideals were to succeed it in every branch of human activities. For a moment the abolition of the temporal sovereignty of the papacy was mooted by the councillors of Charles V, but the Emperor thought it more politic to press upon the Pope his favourite scheme of a General Council representative of both parties in the religious controversy. Clement evaded his demands, but they prepared the way for the Council of Trent, eighteen years later, and long after a joint Council had ceased to be practicable.

On the "counter-Reformation," which the decrees of Trent did much to consolidate, the sack of Rome had an immediate and powerful influence. It was the moral reform, largely emanating from the younger generation in Rome, and steadily encouraged, disciplined and controlled by a succession of Popes, not all eminent for personal virtues, which more than the victories of Catholic princes checked the progress of Protestantism, preserved for the

Roman Church all she had retained, and won back for her much that she had lost. The reaction from the joyous and half-pagan "humanism" of the Renaissance was complete. The Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, who lived through the whole movement, reflects the austere spirit of reformed Rome as faithfully as the School of Athens—and the Galatea and Psyche of the Farnesina—reflect the broad humanity and the refined sensuality of the full Renaissance. Tasso took the place of Ariosto. That measures the greatness of the change.

In the more material domain of worldly politics also the sack was a great event. It sealed the supremacy of the Hapsburgs in Italy, which has been so great a factor in the history of Central Europe to our own time; it intimately affected the state of Germany and the attitude of her princes; and it affected not less deeply the hegemony and the world monarchy of Spain which the Armada was to shatter. Not that the sack itself was the direct cause of these things—like all great events they had innumerable causes; but it was the visible symbol, to the generation which witnessed it, that the new forces about them had transformed the world. As such a symbol the "Sacco di Roma" remains ever memorable to men.

## THE MENIN GATE

The Menin Gate of Ypres is a symbol; no action took place immediately near it, and many of those it commemorates went to the front line without passing through the town of Ypres at all. But it stands at the head of that Menin road by which the enemy expected to enter Ypres as conquerors; it is within the Salient on which for four years hung the issue of the Great War. Few have the knowledge—and fewer the imagination—to realize how

long that issue trembled in the balance, or how often it seemed destined to go against us. There were wonderful feats of arms all along the Allied line—at Arras, on the Somme, and at Verdun, to recall but a few of many glorious names—but nowhere was that struggle so continuous, or to us so costly, as in the perpetual battlefield before the Menin Gate. The Salient at its utmost extent was little more than six miles deep by ten at the base, but a million of our soldiers were wounded there, and a quarter of a million died there. The Menin Gate bears the names of 56,000 who lie in unknown graves.

In October, 1914, the enemy was three miles from the Gate; in May, 1918, he was no more than two-thirds of a mile away. The strategy on both sides was simple. The capture of Ypres would have opened to the enemy the strategic roads to the Channel ports and to the heart of France which meet there; it would have enabled him to drive a wedge between us and the French, to force us back on the ports, or, as he hoped, into the sea. Our business was to hold him if we could not press him back. "There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man. . . . With our backs to the wall . . . each one of us must fight to the end." So Sir Douglas Haig told the Army in the last terrific onslaught of the enemy in April, 1918. So the British in the Salient had fought from the autumn of 1914. All that time they were fighting at every disadvantage. They were outnumbered many times, and outnumbered by constant reliefs of fresh troops; for long they were completely outgunned, and the guns they had were short of ammunition; the enemy held the high ground to the east which commanded our positions and was comparatively dry, while our men had to live in an intolerable sea of foul mud that filled the swamps below. The constant bombardment and the incessant alarms destroyed their power of

sleep. There was no misery of war but famine which they did not undergo, and undergo without respite, or hope of respite, until the end.

Officially there were four battles of Ypres with nearly thirty others grouped about them—battles like Gheluvelt, Messines, Polygon Wood, Passchendaele, Kemel, episodes like Nonne Boschen, Kruiseecke, Cross Roads, Hill 60, Kortekeer Cabaret—all wonders of stubborn endurance and of magnificent dash against overwhelming odds. It is impossible to repeat a twentieth of the names we knew so well in those four years—names which live for ever in the annals of war, and which survivors and the relatives of the fallen will cherish all their lives. Still less is it possible even to mention a fraction of the innumerable incidents which show the spirit in which the troops faced the horrors of their ordeal.

At Gheluvelt, down the Menin road, where a thousand men held the village for hours against thirteen battalions, a regiment reported that "it was quite all right," though they were enfiladed on both flanks. On Hill 60 men of another regiment were asked whether they were falling back. "We have not budged a yard," came the answer, "and have no intention of doing so." When relieved some hours later the survivors came down singing "rag-time" tunes. "Anyway," said a subaltern of the regiment who relieved them, "it will be a glorious death." Then the Germans gassed the Hill. An officer came in and reported, "The men up there are all dead. They were splendid. I thought I ought to report." He died, poisoned, that night.

At Kortekeer a bugler was asked if he could sound the "Charge." "I dunno, sir, but I'll try," and he tried; the men rose with a roar and drove the enemy out of the position. "For the time being," ran the German report, "any further thought of a break-through was out of the

question." An ammunition dump was fired not far from the Menin Gate. The transport loaded up under the explosions from the dump and under the bombardment and got away with their teams and wagons. Later in the day at Gheluvelt the fateful news came back: "My line is broken." Then the Worcesters charged—another but a weaker "Six Hundred"—across the open and right into the village, "It's all right; my line holds" was the next message. Many times the line was broken, or nearly broken—never more dangerously than in 1918—but it was always "all right" in the end. The deliberate and indomitable valour of our men, always most magnificent in the most desperate moments, made it "all right." At evening on the first day of the battle of Grafenstafel there was a gap of 8,000 yards north of the Second Army, right round to Brielen on the west.

These are mere instances taken almost at random from the long list of recorded acts of heroism—there were millions unrecorded—which show the invincible spirit of the men who defended the Salient without blenching from the first year of the War to the last. Not even the enforced abandonment of many of the positions they had won and held at such awful cost—the hardest trial of all to weary troops—could shake it. They were there to "do or die." "There is no other course open to us but to fight it out." And they fought it out, fought it out as the men of the Peninsula, of the Crimea, of the Mutiny fought it out before them. The Menin Gate with its couchant lion bears witness to the grandeur of their deeds, to their noble spirit, to their wonderful achievement. Especially is it the memorial of the Empire to those immortal dead by whose unknown graves it keeps abiding ward.

## THE STUDY OF THE STARS

It seems natural that the fascination of the stars should seize the mind; from the earliest ages of which we have record they have been observed with a diligence and exactitude seldom devoted to the study of earthly phenomena, however remote from the modern mind is the system of designating the constellations according to a Mesopotamian bestiary. Nor was early astronomical knowledge confined to the professional few; it is obvious that, for instance, the poems of Homer and the Book of Job were addressed to audiences capable of appreciating astronomical allusions that need elaborate annotation to-day. An acquaintance with the changing aspect of the heavens through the seasons of the year was for farmers and mariners as much taken for granted as is a knowledge of the calendar among us; and, although the decline of the belief in their control of human destiny has robbed the stars of one of their claims to respect, and the development of urban life has diminished for many the opportunities of observation, it is only yesterday that the celestial globe ceased to be a part of the necessary furniture of every schoolroom.

And yet this older astronomy was an austere study, pursued in the cold and rarefied atmosphere of pure mathematics; it knew the stars only as geometrical points and treated them like counters on a board, plotting their positions and tracing their paths by the laws of spherical trigonometry, a branch of learning that has never in itself possessed a popular appeal. How much wider is the prospect that opens before the amateur astronomer to-day.

The stars have come to life. Our knowledge of them is

no longer confined to their positions on a map; we can weigh them, investigate their chemical composition, trace back their history to a time before the solar system existed, prophesy the evolution that awaits them even if the sun's fires are burnt out and life has faded from the earth. Photography has shown us stars that no telescope can ever make visible to the human eye; elements have lain unsuspected in the earth until spectroscopy has made the first discovery of them in the sun. We may marvel at eclipses and comets and meteors, at double stars and dark stars, stars that are sometimes bright and sometimes faint, stars that blaze suddenly out of obscurity with the fires of some cosmic conflagration, to lapse after a few days or weeks of splendour into insignificance again. We can exercise our imagination on the stupendous mystery of the great nebulæ; or we may turn our attention nearer home and study the evidence that may one day provide an answer to the question, perhaps the most fascinating of all, whether the earth is unique in supporting life, or whether our neighbouring planets are the homes of beings not all unlike ourselves. On all these subjects the results of the most recent study are open to the layman (for no science has been more fortunate in its popular expositors), and that though he may not know even the meaning of azimuth or declination, and may never have opened a nautical almanac or a table of seven-figure logarithms.

> Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.

The deeper notes of the music of the spheres strike as clearly on the ear of the unlearned Lorenzo as on that of a Ptolemy or a Newton. Behind the old astronomy and the new are the same stars. By the divine or heroic names the ancients gave them we know them still. In all observers, whether the old Hebrew who saw them fighting in their

courses against Sisera, or the Christian poet who read in them the testimony of the rule of love,

L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle,

or the modern scientist who deduces from them the laws of space and time, they have inspired the same emotions, wonder at their loveliness, awe in the face of their majesty, exultation in the power of the mind to comprehend the order of their marshalling. To shut our eyes to the stars is to shut our hearts to the heritage of man. Æschylus speaks of them as shining like princes in the sky; the least duty that we owe to princes is to know them by sight.

## THE INFALLIBLE PRESENT

A musical critic the other day ventured the interesting conjecture that fifty years hence Richard Strauss may be regarded much as Mendelssohn is now. However this may be, things as strange have happened in all the arts. Not facility nor learning nor audacity will preserve an artist's reputation unless he has something else which no one has ever defined, and which often is not recognized till long after his death. Charles Lamb and one or two others gave a word of praise to the poetry of Blake when he was alive; but even they would have been surprised to hear of the high esteem in which he is held to-day. Bach, whose fame now overshadows the whole world of music, was neglected for many years after his death; and in the discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds there is hardly a mention of the great Italian Primitives.

Such facts—and there are many of them—are apt, by a curious illusion of vanity, to give us a great opinion of our own discernment compared with the blindness of the past. We have discovered the true masters and revised

the errors of all the ages. We all have experienced a sudden enlightenment compared even with those Victorians who thought far too much of Tennyson and a good deal of utterly forgotten versifiers like Alexander Smith. But the fact is, we are alive, and those Victorians and all their predecessors who made such obvious mistakes have the misfortune to be dead. Because we are alive we can speak for ourselves; but there is no one to speak for them. For the moment we are like the nightingale; no hungry generations tread us down; but we forget, especially when we are young, the hungry generations yet unborn, to whom we shall be even as the Victorians are to us, and who will wonder how we could praise "Blank" when "Dash" was living and singing among us.

There is no safety in the contemporary judgment even of the elect; nor is any artist sure of future applause because the mob dislikes him in his own day, or of future contempt because the mob applauds him. If you are a person of culture now, and secure in your discernment shared by other persons of culture, remember this strange and intimidating fact—that persons of culture like yourself did for the most part think more highly of Ben Jonson than of Shakespeare when they were alive, for Shakespeare pleased the mob and Ben Jonson did not. Yet Shakespeare has continued to please not only the mob, but mankind; while Ben Jonson is now enjoyed with difficulty even by the elect, and still has only a *succès d'estime*.

All this does not mean that persons of culture are less likely to be right than the mob, for the mob is seldom right; but it does mean that we should not be too proud of having been born later than our ancestors. For our superiority of judgment, often real, consists merely in that later birth. We can revise the contemporary judgments of the past, because they were contemporary and ours are not; but our own contemporary judgments will undergo

the same revision and provoke the same contempt. As for our achievements in the discovery of great artists long neglected after their death; such achievements, such revivals, are always happening, but they differ in every age according to the character of its taste. And then, while we remember the forgotten we also forget the once ardently remembered. We can all admire Botticelli, but it may be that our grandsons will despise us for our insensibility to Guido Reni. That may seem impossible to us; but stranger things have happened. The present is always infallible until it becomes the past; and then it is usually wrong.

## MELLOWNESS

There are many people now who like dirt, not on human beings, where they still call it dirt, but on pictures and other works of art, where they call it mellowness. No doubt they suppose that the Old Masters painted mellow pictures, but in that they are for the most part mistaken. "The Blue Boy," for instance, looked mellow until it was cleaned; the blue was reticent, even timid, as if Gainsborough had shirked his problem while pretending to solve it. But when it was cleaned the boy was as blue as a kingfisher, and at once many people said the picture was ruined; it had lost all that old-mastery mellowness which is their name for dirt.

No doubt this strange taste comes partly of the worship of age for its own sake—a dirty picture looks older than a clean one, and is therefore more esteemed; but after all, if you admire an Old Master, you should wish to see his pictures as he painted them, as he intended them to be, and it is Time, not the painter, that has obscured his works with a slow deposit of grime. Gainsborough meant his

boy to be blue—as blue as he could paint him. He, and most great colourists, achieved harmony by force, not by weakness of colour, like Nature herself in her birds and butterflies and flowers, which do not need dirt to enhance them and which are most beautiful when brand-new. It is not the way of most great colourists, who usually have ardent temperaments, to paint in the colours which are now called subdued. They may, especially in their later years, aim at delicacy of colour; but that is obscured by dirt just as much as brightness is. A dirty Velasquez, or late Titian, or Rembrandt is like a dull imitation of itself, with dinginess instead of delicacy.

The young, with the healthy tastes of youth, are often depressed by a collection of Old Masters. It is the dirt that depresses them; but often in time they grow ashamed of their natural distaste for dirt and learn to call it mellowness. We are all, inured to the grime of our great towns, apt to be subdued to what we work in; our eyes and our minds accept as beauty that which is merely matter in the wrong place, and we positively prefer our compulsory dinginess to the happy audacities of Nature. We are afraid of colour, as the conventional are afraid of high spirits; and we make a strange distinction between the colours of Nature, which we take to be crude and unrefined, and the colours of art, which we prefer subdued to our own timidity. So one may see in shops "art colours," such as are found in Nature only in ailing flowers deprived of sun; colours that seem to be aiming at something and missing it; which achieve harmony by being all faded, as human beings can achieve harmony by losing their character. Or, in reaction from this refined timidity, "art colours" become lurid, like the skins of some serpents or lizards; and this luridness is an echo in art of the luridness of a dirty world. It reminds one of the protective colouring of creatures that live in horrid desert places, and it is perhaps

the result of a protective effort of the human mind to adapt its tastes to the prevailing ugliness which it has made for itself.

But after all, beauty is beauty and ugliness ugliness; and we cannot escape from that fact by any precious perversities of taste. All the artistic peoples of the world have loved bright colours, like Nature herself; they have echoed her daring patterns and harmonies in their pictures, their buildings, their stuffs, and their clothes; like the birds and the flowers, but with a conscious instead of an unconscious art, they have expressed the joy of life in purity and brightness of colour. We should be startled, and perhaps horrified, if we could see a Greek Temple in all its original blaze of paint. We are used to old Gothic churches, and suppose that they were born old and faded; but if we could see a new one as the builders meant it to be, clean and fierce and glittering, we should long for the touch of Time, and dirt, to mellow it. Yet dirt remains matter in the wrong place, and most of all on works of art, where, at best, it obscures the purpose of the artist with a happy accident and levels the first with the second rate.

## FLOSCULOUS RELIEVO

Flosculous Relievo—it is an ill phrase, a vile phrase; but it has an exotic and factitious beauty that compels a morbid savouring of its vileness. One hundred years ago an advertisement in *The Times* held out to ladies of taste and genius the lure of flosculous relievo, which was already "so" highly appreciated in the fashionable world. Doubtless the learned at the Victoria and Albert Museum or at the Royal School of Art Needlework could tell the world precisely what flosculous relievo was, and how it was used "in modern dress and general decoration"; but all whose

feeling for language is stronger than their feeling for needlework would be loth to let bald fact disturb the fancies which those two words set fluttering. Flosculous Relievo —the real thing could never be so fantastically feminine, so daintily decorative, so adorably absurd as the words suggest. And it could be mastered in two lessons, at one guinea each. Tatting, or knotting, would be cheap at the price; and if *petit point* seems to demand at least five guineas, a score would be an unworthy price for flosculous relievo. But there is more to come.

In 1825 the advertiser knew the ropes (or the threads, or strips, or ribbons) as well as they are known to-day. Two guineas would not only enable you to speak the words "flosculous relievo" trippingly on the tongue, with that superior air of familiarity with which, some years ago, a happy few were able to speak of Mah Jongg, of khongs, and of pungs. Two lessons, at one guinea each, and by means of this beautiful and refined art you might obtain, with ease and elegance, "31. or 41. a week." It is incredible that the practice of it should ever have died out; that ladies of taste and genius should not still be enriching themselves with weekly pounds sterling and the world with more and more flosculous relievo.

An art with such a name must, indeed, have been a pleasing, indeed a fascinating, occupation. And the thought of it may well rouse in many a male breast a shy and secret envy of the power possessed by women of using their hands on something other than that with which their brains are occupied. There is one obvious and rather painful side of the matter which we cannot overlook. No man who has been compelled to discuss a practical and serious matter with a woman but must be aware of the monstrously unfair "pull" that she has in being able (in appearance, at any rate) to divide her attention between her flosculous relievo and the subject under discussion. A needle must be

threaded; a ball of silk picked up; an embroidery frame adjusted; and, while the effect on the discussion is like the effect of a frivolous or uninterested player on a game of lawn tennis, the man knows very well that these interruptions are planned both to throw him out of his stride and to give the subtle feminine brain opportunities for thinking undisturbed. He, poor wretch, whose only manual occupation is smoking, can counter by nothing but striking matches or scraping out his pipe.

But these are not the only moments when a man may wish that he, too, could knit, or knot, or do flosculous relievo. He is recovering from an illness, or he has read and written till he is tired. He wants to rest; but he needs also an occupation that will save him from feeling merely idle, and will prevent him from pure fidgeting. He thinks back, regretfully, to the days when, as a small boy, he was kept out of mischief by being set down to "matwork" or "macramé," or netting, and found that, truly, they were not bad fun. Those days are not to be recaptured by most men. And so, futile, unproductive, restless, we rattle our keys and our money, and strike more matches, and waggle our feet about, while on the other side of the hearth is serenity, pleasing occupation, and a growing store of flosculous relievo.

## THE SHAWL

We return to our simplicities. The reappearance of the shawl as a feminine garment merges our modern hour in the ages. It is a confession of the failure of all elaboration to improve, in principle, upon a simple square of fabric—as fruitful of miracles as the magician's cloth. The shawl, in some sort, must have been the earliest achievement of the earliest loom known to man. To say that it came,

like the word itself, from the East is merely to agree with this theory of the source of the human race. Beneath the shawl the womanhood of all times and all countries is one. From Kashmir to the Argentine, from African jungle to Lancashire mill, from Princess Badroulboudour's silken gossamer to the "decent tippet" of sweet old Victorian ladies, from the Irish colleen in her plaid to the goddesses of classic Olympus and Raphael's Madonna, its variations alike for usefulness and beauty have been infinite.

Yet still it remains the simple, unalterable square which only instinctive art on the part of the living wearer can suit to its immediate purpose. As every artist knows, any modification of this intrinsic simplicity—any permanent adaptation to some particular aim—is æsthetically disastrous. Let it be of what material, what colour you will; let it be laced, embroidered, fringed; let it be of Italian black or the "bright shawl" of Spain; let it reveal a "Paisley-pear" design or be sewn with gold or studded with gems—these differences do not matter. That it should be the one four-square piece is all. Just as the violin is the perfect instrument, so the shawl is the perfect decorative raiment. Its demands are equally exacting. There is no easy road for the unblest to the nice wearing of a shawl. Only by the rightful executant, if one may call her so, can its beauty be fully honoured.

It is a matter for regret that—were it only for the instruction of us moderns—there should be no means of studying the actual movements associated with the Greek *peplon*, the shawl at once of bewitching Helen and of faithful Penelope. The static loveliness we know so well is, after all, only a partial immortality. If the cinematograph had arrived, say, twenty-four centuries earlier our present-day *débutantes* might have had lessons of grace in the wearing of a shawl from artists of deportment, compared with whom our present film "stars" would seem uncouth barbarians.

*Incessu patuit dea.* Only in motion and in poise can a shawl be made to give its note of splendid effrontery, modesty, cajolement, serene confidence, or whatever mood it is desired to suggest. Just as the Western farmer can tell of what stuff a young rancher is made by the way he throws the saddle across a horse, so she whose fairy-gift it was that she should know how to wear a shawl betrays herself in the moment when she throws a shawl over her shoulders. Coupled with just the right glance, just the right manner, it is a moment of supreme potential enchantment. Woe to the modern maid who fails in this, and passes the portal to her car without having registered an ineffaceable memory in the right quarter! She will never recapture the opportunity.

It may be said that the shawl is no monopoly of womankind—that the shepherd's cloak and the prophet's mantle have been often only the shawl under other names. In this regard, however, male tradition is disappointing. The toga of the Roman Senator was not square, but curved. Nothing corresponding even to a material mantle has fallen upon the modern representatives of prophecy. The trouser is the enemy. It is incompatible with fluent draperies of any sort, as our statues sufficiently show. Only in the land of the kilt and tartan, so far as these islands are concerned, does manly vigour find its sumptuary due.

## THE POKE-BONNET

One of those specious theories which are the paper-money of social history—all too seldom backed by the bullion of fact—makes play with a belief that fashions run in cycles. It is the sort of thing which might be true if men and women lived "by the book of arithmetic"; but it is just not true. Not even a particular curve in the male silk-

hat, generally quoted as proof, ever recurs in its exactitude. What we mistake for a "cycle" is at its nearest an expanding spiral. What a hopeless prospect would lie before us if, even in matters so trivial, history ever really did repeat itself! So with the poke-bonnet, the prospective return of which is said to be heralded in the down-curved hat-brims which have been shadowing so many pretty faces lately. There have even been rumours of the reappearance of a ribbon beneath the chin.

Does this mean that the symbol of so much that womanhood would seem to have lost is to return, with all its moral significances, or even without them? Shall we ever revert to what was accounted for the maids and matrons who were young a hundred years ago a very prison to eyes and ears? It seems improbable. To look upon the world through a tunnel; to be deemed fast if even the tip of the nose were visible at a right-angle; to forfeit, in sidelong appeal at any rate, every advantage which youth may be supposed to possess over age; to go through life, so far as the outside world was concerned, in blinkers—to that no generation of civilized women is likely to submit again. Yet somehow we look upon the poke-bonnet—as upon its military contemporary the "old shako"—with a sense not of its restrictions, but of its charm. The late General Booth's homage, still visibly expressed, was no idle whim. The artist and the poet, not to mention the designer of stage-costume, have drawn inspiration from the poke-bonnet. Even in fairyland—if one is to believe Sir James Barrie—the poke-bonnet is still largely worn.

If there were need of an explanation, it might be well to remember that a head-dress which in one form or another dominated feminine vogue for at least forty years, had in its arrival nothing whatever to do with exaggerated modesty. This association was a pure accident—just an immortal adventure. Like so much that has been beauti-

ful, the poke-bonnet takes us back in its origin to pastoral simplicity. It came from Arcady. Its direct ancestress was the straw-"flop" of milkmaid and shepherdess. Its ribbon was evolved from the coloured scarf which these tied, for convenience sake, round head and chin, thus bending the brim close to either cheek. When, at Iris's bidding, the "sun-burnt sickle-men, of August weary," put on their "rye-straw hats" to meet "fresh nymphs in country footing," they—and probably the nymphs too—foreshadowed all unwittingly the poke-bonnet.

From the "inverted flower-basket" of Fragonard to the more consciously upholstered "coal-scuttle" was, after all, a natural transition. The poke-bonnet dreamt of by the men who won Waterloo was no prudish eye-sore, but a flaunting shape, garlanded and ribboned and laced. It was a frame-work for loveliness which enhanced rather than withheld. It had in store for the gallant worshipper a thrill of surprise and delight now quite impracticable. When thrown carelessly back, the ribbons still tied at the throat, or swung at finger-tip, setting free a shower of ringlets to the breezes of a May morning—who shall pretend that the poke-bonnet was not a thing of beauty then? It had already begun to dwindle with Queen Victoria's advent. By the Crimea it had come to bear little more relation to its earlier self than did the pearl-broidered coif of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the "kennel" of Catharine of Aragon. Ultimately, as we all remember, it degenerated into the mere beaded flower-tuft of the Elder Miss Blossom, or the "three blackberries and a thorn" celebrated by the late Corney Grain, which could only claim on the score of a ribbon to be a "bonnet" at all. Thus the poke-bonnet lived its life and fulfilled its task, and faded into nothing. It can no more return than can the two generations of women with whom it suffered and rejoiced, whose gaiety as well as piety, frailties as well as virtues, its memory enshrines.

# ON KEEPING COOL

There are still some living who were old enough in Mrs. Proudie's day to attend conversaziones. They might, if they would, reveal to us many secrets—indeed, they do most prodigally reveal them whenever they publish *Memories* in two volumes or *More Memories* in three. But there is one matter upon which not one of them has ever given satisfactory information. How did they keep cool?

The sun was no less fierce in their day than in ours, and they had not, it would appear, our advantages. They had neither our abundance of ice, nor our electric fans, nor our scientific ventilation. In town and country they neglected or treated with contempt nearly all the expedients upon which we rely. Even at the seaside they made a singularly hot business of bathing. They seated themselves on stiff chairs upon the beach, dressed—if we are to believe contemporary drawings—in garments not very different from those in which they attended funerals. When it was time for them to bathe they entered great cabins on wheels, which were presently drawn into the water. From these they emerged with timorous modesty by way of a funnel or hood, which gave them shelter until the waves themselves provided a covering. Such part of them as was now exhibited to the public view appears to have been clothed in a fashion very like that which they affected at weddings. Their "dip," as they loved to call it, may have had a becoming dignity, but it cannot have been, by modern standards, a refreshing or invigorating experience. Nevertheless they enjoyed it, and they enjoyed their parties too, and contrived to look pretty and cool at them without the

help of one revolution of an electric fan. How they did it is a mystery. If some domestic historian would solve it, he would do great service to a number of ladies who find themselves nowadays, in spite of a remarkable willingness not to be excessively clothed, overwhelmed with distresses in warm weather.

The only solution that suggests itself is that there may be some connexion between looking cool and being cool of which we are not fully aware. The secret was certainly known long before the days of Trollope, and has been but recently lost. Romney's famous portrait of Mrs. Mark Currie, for example, shows a lady of so gentle a dignity that we may be sure she would have scorned to have appeared heated on any occasion. Yet the dress which Romney persuaded her to wear, though much simpler and cooler than many dresses of the period, is not itself a cool one, for it demands a small waist and what would now be considered a superfluity of petticoats. It has, however, an extraordinary appearance of coolness because the hasty eye sees only an abundant freedom of outward line and a billowy lightness of visible material.

And this must have been the secret of Trollope's ladies too. The Warden's tea party, we are told, "went off as such parties do. There were fat old ladies, in fine silk dresses, and slim young ladies, in gauzy muslin frocks. . . . Young gentlemen, rather stiff about the neck, clustered near the door, not as yet sufficiently in courage to attack the muslin frocks, who awaited the battle, drawn up in a semi-circular array." The whole affair is described as if it were a contest of the fiercest kind; there is an orchestral interlude, in which the ladies as well as the men most strenuously take part, which continues by the light of "wax candles arranged in sconces" until a "stiff neckcloth is no better than a rope" and a minor canon "falls in a syncope of exhaustion against the wall." The black

coats perish, but the muslin frocks survive—scarcely ruffled, it would seem.

In *Framley Parsonage* we may observe the same miracle. Miss Griselda Grantly was by nature cool, magnificent, statuesque; she would have died rather than allow one hair of the future Marchioness to get out of place while she danced with Lord Dumbello. Yet she danced in a way that would reduce modern young ladies to the condition of the minor canon. "She was to be won," we are told, "by a rapid twirl much more probably than by a soft word. The offer of which she would approve would be conveyed by two all-but-breathless words during a spasmodic pause in a waltz; and then, as she lifted up her arm to receive the accustomed support at her back, she might just find power enough to say, 'You—must—ask—papa.'"

How did Griselda and her contemporaries keep cool? They wore, if it be reckoned in yards, perhaps twenty times as much as they would be wearing to-day. Is muslin the key to the mystery? Does the secret of coolness lie, not in the close abbreviations of the present fashion, but in the voluminousness which seems, though it may not be, airy? Somewhere there must be a secret which has not come down to us, for the "semi-circular array" in muslin undoubtedly continued to look charming even after the orchestral interlude, which is remarkable when we remember that the young ladies at the Warden's party would not have been allowed to use powder whatever their necessity. They had to rely upon a natural chill; so did Griselda when she whirled across the floor in Dumbello's arms at the crisis of her fortunes. And that they relied upon it with success it is impossible to doubt, unless the Dumbellos were all blind and the Victorian novelists, by a singular conspiracy, all liars in a gallant cause.

## ON COUNTRY COUSINS

Led out by expectation of warm weather for the journey or, it may be, by desire to be equipped with new frocks for the spring, ladies whose smiles are but little known in the Town come hither in spring and demand to be entertained. Those who are to be their sponsors and guides call them "country cousins," and sometimes yawn in secret at news of their approach. Now and then the yawn is pardonable. The country cousin can have an insistent way with her. Her time is short; she is unwearying; she is haunted by a fear of missing something, and is not to be persuaded that others may lack both her inquiring mind and her bucolic vigour. If she is a cousin of the earnest sort, modest, eager, and willing to learn, she treats a dinner-party of distinguished guests as a menagerie in which every animal is expected instantly to perform. She feels, like Hannah More's mouthpiece, that her own mind has been refreshed "but with the petty rills and penurious streams of knowledge which country society affords," and she is agape for genius.

If, on the other hand, she is a cousin frivolous, she may have a disastrous wish to astonish the Town. Knowing that very soon the consequences of her words and deeds will be buried deep in the village of Axle Cleaver, she talks and acts at random, making mischief while the lamps shine. Nothing pleases her so well as to see urban eyebrows mount in shocked disapproval. A country cousin indeed! She will meet the mockers on their own ground, will ride through them all rough-shod, waving the banners of borrowed sophistication, proclaiming everywhere that, for a fortnight at least, she is not to be overlooked. No

one can deny that her methods are effective. Lips curl, eyebrows mount, shoulders are turned; she is indeed observed. Not until next spring does she realize that invitations accepted by her are not often repeated. Meanwhile her sponsor writhes, knowing the truth. Did he yawn at her approach? Next year he will shudder and flee. Nothing, he perceives, can create so much scandal in so short a time as ingenuousness that is fatally determined. The cousin herself escapes, vanishing in a cloud of rumour; he, who has no retreat in Axle Cleaver but a cherished reputation in St. James's, spends his summer explaining her amid a darkening cloud of fact.

These are country cousins who bring discredit on their kind; theirs is the responsibility when the phrase is spoken with a contemptuous ring. For the rest, they are to be welcomed, though they do profess an insatiable desire to visit the monuments of our City and though they refuse, as if every moment of sleep were a moment wasted, to be dispatched to bed until the sun is up. It is, to the surprise of their sponsors, singularly pleasant to re-discover London in their company and to be able to say, with the impressive solemnity of one who makes a revelation, "This, you see, is Fleet Street," or "That is the Marble Arch." They want to hear about the Marble Arch, and what pleases them to hear pleases us to tell.

Are they not, moreover, so good to look upon that we are proud to be in their company? Is there not a malicious satisfaction in introducing them, whose colour is of the wind, to ladies of quality, whose whole skill is in their complexions? Is there not, too, a freshness in their conversation which is to urban wit what mountain water is to a jaded wine? Not from them shall we receive a fourth-hand discourse on the latest play or a smirk borrowed from the latest novel. Not by them shall we be made to endure again, and once again, that flourishing story of Lady O,

that barbed inquiry after Mrs. P. As a concession to us they may attempt these things, but very easily they are led away to dogs and horses, to men and things of the earth, to thoughts that they have dared to think slowly and alone. They have a power, even if they be neither brilliant nor profound, to restore a balance to life, to reassure us that beneath all shifting pretence there is a social root and beneath all cosmopolitanism something English. "You will think," they suggest in apology, "that I am very much a country cousin." But they belie their apology with a smile, knowing full well that among wise men this thought of them is a thought of praise so long as—except in a frock or two—they do not ape the Town.

## SALAD DAYS

These are the days when the hawkers cry "Strawberries," proclaiming, as they guide their charmingly laden barrows along the London streets, that another of the delights of our fugitive summer is with us. Strawberries claim their laureates yearly, and no one would have it otherwise, for the old verdict, given before they had attained their modern size and sweetness, stands truer than ever in these later Junes. Doubtless God could have made a better berry, we can still say, but doubtless God never did. But there is another bowl, standing beside that from which the strawberries rise in a jolly heap and holding more varied and less seasonable offerings. Why is it that we are as silent as the cuckoo after the roses are in bloom when it comes to praising salads? On those pleasant summer supper tables, where the patient viands wait unspoilt until the dusk has driven us in from the tennis courts, salads are surely delightful alike to the eye and to the palate. Without them the cold fowl would seem

uninspiring, and the salmon would risk being left untasted. If they were missing, not even the snowy array of napkins could make up for a sombre absence of cool colour. Not, of course, that the salad must invariably be green; for there are salads white and salads red. Nor need they be simple; do not travellers from America tell strange tales of whole pine trees sacrificed to make a single side dish, and other epicures murmur, when salads come into the conversation, of truffles cooked in champagne, of mussels and Château Yquem, and of curious fishes to which the standards of ripeness more familiar in connexion with game have been applied?

But such exotic extravagances do not suggest an English summer. Our salads are unassuming and do not call attention to themselves; possibly that is why we have forgotten to honour them. We eat our lettuce with as little tender emotion as may be supposed to agitate our fellow-gourmets, the rabbits and the slugs. We are doubtless affected also by the length of time during which salads remain available. Were strawberries themselves to arrive with the daffodils and to linger on until the swallows grow restless, then even they might not escape the perils bred of familiarity. Indeed, strawberries from their very lusciousness might inspire us with a positive dislike, while salads, although they are our guests for months, do not outstay their welcome. If they went from us suddenly, we should miss them as we would a favourite familiar picture from our walls. It is only because they, like pictures, are there all the time that we cease to notice them. Their green background pleasantly setting off the touches of white or red or yellow in them, and their wooden spoons perfect foils to their silver bowls, they make up as a whole a restful symphony.

It can no longer be said they are not understood in England. The contemptuous clown who was no great

Nebuchadnezzar, Sir, and had not much skill in grass, belonged to a vanished generation. Americans may be more elaborate and the French more ingenious than we are to-day; but in English homes (one is silent about hotels and restaurants) we have learnt to mix salads simply and with art. That we do so should be admitted and we should take pride in them. To praise them lyrically would, of course, be foolishness. They belong, like many good things, to the cool element of prose. But they deserve at least to be mentioned in the catalogue of our summer amenities. Strawberries cannot be allowed to have the field to themselves.

## EPHEMERIDES

How diverse our temperaments can be, even in regard to such familiar things as a calendar! Some impatient souls are provoked by any calendar that presupposes a piecemeal inspection—like the kind in which each day, with its appropriate "tag" or motto, is represented by a leaf to be torn off every morning. They refuse to believe in the need for waiting twelve months before the final quotations, or pearls of domestic wisdom, are retailed. Like Bunyan's Prodigal, they squander the lore intended for four seasons in not many more minutes. Tossing aside the *débris* of the year's literary allotment, they are thankful, perhaps, if as much as one memorable phrase or distich remains with them. For these the whole purpose of the calendar has remained unfulfilled, like that of the detective-story for readers who have maliciously begun by consulting the last chapter. On the other hand there is an exactly opposite temperament—more common and, in general, more happily disposed. To its possessors the secrecy of the future is in itself an attraction it would be sacrilege

to destroy. These lend themselves willingly to the Bergsonian theory of time. They would pass through its landscape, taking in whatever beauties it may afford as they go. They recognize instinctively how much the "view from the air" loses. This human characteristic has been and is still exploited by all those forms of literature known to library-catalogues as "ephemerides."

It is to be remembered that the almanac of daily thoughts is only a development of those whose essential purpose was astrological prophecy. Even now prophetic almanacs, based on the planetary motions, sell by the million in both hemispheres. Their popularity, however, does not always betoken a genuine wish to know and to plan out the future. On the contrary, the lure is far more often that of mystery—the joy of hazard, the guessing at unknown influences. If to learn the future were really the aim, these almanacs could as easily be calculated for twenty years ahead as for one. They, as well as the others, are there because they satisfy an innate desire to take existence in serial form, with a dream, a hope, an adventure, a moral, for each day as it passes.

At the same time there are certain apparent falsities attached to the laying out of wisdom's always-ready store as a trail of crumbs or as a fuse beneath a drawn and always-receding curtain. Why is it that the maxims of thrift, or industry, or promptitude according to January should not be just as true for December? The answer is simple. Not only are they as valid in the one month as in the other, but they will probably be found repeated in a slightly varying form on each occasion. The "ephemeral" mind, however, prefers this method of presentation. It does so not out of ignorance alone, but partly from a reluctance to attack the problem of universal truth all at once. It is a commonplace discovery that proverbs contradict each other. Certainly any attempt to synthetise

them, from Solomon to Benjamin Franklin, tends always to show their limitations.

The belief that any "household words" can be wholly wrong is, of course, absurd. If they were so they would not be household words. All are true partially, for some people, and for a furtherance of some motives. They are, like other things, relative to their source, to their audience, and to the ideal they serve. This explains a good deal of the cautious parcimony advocated by Father Abraham and Poor Richard to the American colonist, as it was to be by Cobbett a little later to the English cottager. The more "uplifting" messages favoured in present-day almanacs have equally their social reference. Beneath all —modern sentiment and ancient saw—lies the Creator's design, still in its fullness unrevealed. The "ephemerist" accepts a vision of the day—its hap for good or ill, its mood, its inspiration. He or she is in some ways, possibly, more wise than the philosopher who would strive vainly to grasp the "scheme of things entire."

## SLAVES OF FURNITURE

"I have been a slave to my furniture for years"; thus ran a phrase in the will of Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell. A slave, or rather a very faithful servant, to his country and to his duty all knew him to be; but those who are sensitive to the little personal touch in biography will welcome, without any disrespect to his memory, the revelation that of one thing this brave man was afraid. He was afraid of his furniture. He could make the Egyptian Army "out of mud"; but he could not set his own house in order by selling, giving away, burning or chopping up his furniture. The tyranny of their furniture is a tyranny of which few soldiers have to complain. Most of them, as they

wear towards middle life, begin to long for half Lord Grenfell's complaint, and for a home in which comfortably to suffer from it. But he was a Grenfell as well as a soldier. He had, probably by inheritance, personal belongings which might well prove impediments to one so busy in creating and collecting *impedimenta*. Did he ever, in his later years, visit Chelsea, where people sit on cushions and eat off the floor? Was it contemplation of this simple life, in which civilization has come full circle to touch barbarism, that nerved him at last to resolve upon a Parthian shot at his tyrant? His trustees were directed by his will to sell as much of his furniture as possible.

His example may nerve others to equal or even greater daring. No householder, no tenant even of what Mrs. Earle, moving to London from her Surrey garden, called a shelf, but is sometimes aghast at or annoyed by the insidious rapidity with which "things" accumulate. In vain he assures his friends and relatives that he has no space for another chair however spider-legged, another table however occasional. Birthday presents and Christmas presents continue to make congested districts of his rooms. One of the older generation dies, and he finds himself the inheritor of sideboards and of cabinets planned on the generous scale of an earlier day; and others of the older generation continue to live and to cast eyes of affectionate remembrance on pieces which, to them, are old friends, and to their present owner are old men of the sea. A shrewd inhabitant of a country where movement is freer and commoner than in England once declared that the only way for an Englishman to keep his independence was to have a fire or to move house once in every ten years. Only a fire can help the inheritor of his grandfather's walnut, for, should he offer to dispose of it, some other member of the family is sure to be shocked but decline to buy.

There is fashion, too, which frequently incites to the purchase of the latest thing, but seldom provides the courage to banish the latest but one farther than to the upper floors. Proud of their enlightened notions of hygiene and of comfort, young married couples start housekeeping with few things and those good. Their home shall never be overcrowded like the homes of their elders. And in ten years, worried by the expense and the trouble of taking care of their furniture, constricted in their movements, not daring to cross one of their own rooms in the dark, they begin to sigh—she for a furnished (not too much furnished) suite in an hotel, he for his club in winter-time, and in summer-time, more romantically, for the open road, a stout ash-stick and a knotted handkerchief. Welcome the dentist's chair, the operating table, rather than any chair or table of their own! They, too, like the rest, have been enslaved by their furniture, by its associations, by the chance that one day it may become really valuable, by any or by all of the disguises under which it conceals its boa-constrictor qualities.

Every five years or so there is an effort at revolt. The tyranny shall be thrown off. There shall be a great clearance. Space and freedom shall be restored: The end of it is that the wife has given away a dozen old frocks and destroyed a score of dress-boxes, and the husband has sold a few books, burned a few pipes, and discarded a few pairs of boots. And the furniture, in grim and silent triumph, settles down to another spell of undisturbed tyranny. Very well it knows that in time it will have become a habit. And nothing in life is so secure as a bad habit.

## ON READING LETTERS

Of the many who lament a decline in the art of writing letters, few, unless they go to a remote place for a holiday, discover that there is an art also in receiving them. Whoever wishes to enjoy his letters must protect himself from surfeit. They must be his rare pleasures, sharpened by waiting, realized at ease. Dorothy Osborne herself, than whom there has been no "pleasinger" letter-writer in English, would lose the honours that are her due if a packet of hers were plucked hastily from a mound of correspondence and scanned by tired eyes in a busy hour. Letters received in bulk are always letters without delight. In towns, they pour in with every post, drowning their welcome in their own profusion. Their envelopes, printed, type-written, or scrawled in that slack, characterless hand which is the hireling's mark, offer little temptation to the curious. We know without looking that they all have "pleasure in acknowledging our esteemed communication of even date," and that they were all written, however various their addresses, by our tedious and circumlocutory friend Per Pro of the Rubber Stamp. A secretary, if a secretary there be, opens, sorts, and dockets them. They appear upon the table an evilly enchanted pile which, like a task in a fairy tale, grows as fast as it is diminished.

If by chance the pleasingest letter in the world arrives in these circumstances, how small and brief is its credit! The secretary spares it; its envelope, still intact, is marked "Personal"; its hand-writing, seen among a confusion of alien type-script, casts for a moment a familiar spell. A rash hand, yielding to temptation, seizes and opens it, and suddenly its length, its leisurely manner, all its happy

contrasts with the style of Per Pro which, in a lazy arm-chair, would be its special glories, seem wasteful and in vain. There is no time to read it as it should be read. A hurried eye sweeps carelessly down the first page; impatient fingers rustle on to the second. The spell is broken and the charm fled. The pleasingest letter, like good wine taken at a gulp, has been made a sacrifice to haste.

In the quietness of a holiday in deep country all this is changed. Here come none but private letters that have no need, upon their outsides, to insist upon their own privacy. They come so seldom that the appearance of a man with a bag at the far edge of the meadows is an event to make windows open and heads peer forth. How slowly he approaches! How long he rests at the last stile and how portentously he clicks the last gate! The urban ear, awaiting a ring and the click of a letter-box, hears only a double, an eminently postal knock, then the shuffling of slippers across a flagged kitchen, the lifting of a latch, and an outburst of conversation. The post? That will come in good time when the postman has amply discussed the news of the day. It is long withheld, but it comes at last. Each envelope, lovingly turned over, weighed in the hand, squeezed by the fingers and examined by the eyes, is rich in promises that feed upon exquisite delays in fulfilment. Slowly the flaps are opened, the contents unfolded and smoothed upon the knee. Who dare say now, as the postman clicks the first gate on his departing way, that there is decay in the art of letter-writing? Is not each one of the little group upon the table, even the humblest of them, a masterpiece, if we judge it by its power to delight? And if by chance there is among them the pleasingest letter in the world, shall it not have due honour now, and honour yet again this evening when its sheets are reddened by the early autumn fire?